

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND CASTE
PANCHAYATS IN SOUTH INDIA

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PREFACE

It is believed that there exists a difference on the operative level between the northern and southern types of caste in India. Every caste or sub-caste tends to fit into the hierarchy of castes by affiliating itself to one of the traditional Varnas. The difference between the northern and southern types seems to lie not so much in the structural framework of the caste system, as in the cultural and organizational set-up of its component parts such as the ideas of purity and pollution, choice of spouses and the manner and extent of social control. The last of these, namely, social control, forms the substance of the present work.

It is said that in certain regions of Eastern India the political power, namely, the king or the ruling chief has been holding control over religious institutions as well and has been the ultimate authority to deal with all socio-religious matters including questions of caste. In South India religious institutions are said to be the authority for interpreting Dharma-sastras which embody the rules governing the Hindu Caste System.

Almost all the castes in South India acknowledge the authority of established religious institutions in socio-religious matters. With a view to ascertaining how and to what extent the latter exercise effective social control, information was obtained from the records maintained by some of the institutions as far as they were available, particularly of cases referred to them regarding caste offences and clarification of caste rules and conventions. The following pages furnish the details of the study and will, it is hoped, give an idea of the manner and extent of control exercised by the religious institutions in matters relating to caste.

The study reveals that many of the castes in Madras and Mysore States still acknowledge the theocratic authority of institutions such as the Matas and Acharya Peetas. But the factors which really control the intra and inter mobility of castes seem to emanate from the ideas of purity and pollution operating at different levels of participation such as ritual observances and inter dining on ceremonial occasions.

The details of the work are embodied in this volume in two parts. Part one relates to data collected in the Advaita and Saiva matas in Madras and Mysore States in 1961 and Part two to the study in 1964 of the records maintained by the Rajaguru of Anegundi—Shri Vaishnava Swayamacharya Peeta.

The former was undertaken at the instance of Sri N. K. Bose, the then Director, Anthropological Survey of India, Government of India and the latter, at the instance of Dr D. K. Sen, the *Ex-Director*. I am indebted to them for the support and encouragement they gave me for the accomplishment of the task. I am particularly thankful to the Matathipatis in Madras and Mysore States and the Rajaguru who were gracious enough to make the records available to me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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CONTENTS

PART ONE

	PAGE
I. Introduction	1—3
II. History of the Sankara Mata—Sringeri, Mysore State	3—9
III. History of the Sankara Mata—Kumbakonam, Madras State	9—11
IV. History of the three Saiva Matas—Thanjavur District, Madras State	12
V. History of the two Vira-saiva Matas at Chitradurga and Sirigeri, Mysore State	13—16
VI. Case Records of Sankara Mata, Sringeri : Discussion of six typical cases	16—32
(1) Letters from Individuals of Karnataka Region to the Sankara Mata, Sringeri	32—36
(2) Letters from Caste Councils of Karnataka Region to the Sankara Mata, Sringeri	36—42
(3) Miscellaneous letters received by the Sankara Mata (Sringeri from different parts of South India)	42—65
VII. Case Records of Sankara Mata, Kumbakonam—Madras)	65—74
VIII. Case Records of Murgharajendra Mata (Vira-saivas), Chitradurga—Mysore State	74—82
IX. Tabular Statements recorded by the Taralabala Mata (Vira-saiva) Sirigeri—Mysore State	83—90
X. Consolidated statement of cases classified under different categories	91—98

PART TWO

I. History of the Srivaishnava Swayamacharya Purusha Peeta of Kanakgiri—Anegundi Simhasana—Mysore State	101—106
II. Caste Councils—their composition and function	106—110
III. English rendering of 30 case Records furnished by the Rajaguru of Kanakgiri—Anegundi Simhasana	110—168
IV. Comments on Cases in III	169—197
V. Remarks—Conclusion	197—204

PART ONE

HISTORY OF THE SANKARA MATAS—THREE SAIVA
MATAS AND TWO VIRA-SAIVA MATAS—THE CASE
RECORDS—REMARKS

I INTRODUCTION

Religious affiliation divides the *Brahmans* of Peninsular India into three major sects, popularly called the *Smartha*, *Vaishnava* and the *Madhwa*. The term *Smartha* literally means one who follows the *Smritis*, and *Vaishnava* means the follower of Vishnu cult. In the language of philosophy, *Smarthas* are said to belong to the *Advaita* School propounded by Shri Sankara. *Vaishnavaites* belong to the School of *Visistadvaita* of Shri Ramanuja. *Madhwas* follow the doctrines of Shri Madhwacharya, the founder of *Dwaita* School of Philosophy. They are also worshippers of Vishnu and call themselves *Vaishnavaites*.

Shri Sankara (788-810 A.D.), the earliest of the three great Hindu philosophers, is believed to have established four centres (*matas*) for the propagation of Vedic religion. They are called *Amnaya Matas*. The northernmost centre is located at the holy *Badarikasrama* and is called *Jyotir Mata*. The eastern one was founded at *Puri*, the western at *Dwaraka* and the southern at *Sringeri* in *Mysore State*.^{*} The *mata* at *Sringeri* is believed to be the principal centre in the South. It is called the *Sringeri Sarada Peetam* and *Vyakyana Simhasana*; *Sureshwaracharya*, one of the four disciples of Shri Sankara, is said to have been its first pontiff.

A similar institution, called *Kamakoti Peetam*, established at *Kancheepuram* in *Chinglepet district* of *Madras State*, claims equal status and antiquity to that of *Sbri Sarada Peetam* of *Sringeri*. The present headquarters of the *peetam* is located at *Kumbakonam* in *Thanjavur district*. Both the institutions are intended, in the main, to maintain and propagate Vedic religion and practices.

Caste differences, specially those that exist between the *Brahmans* and other castes, have caused a deep rift in the minds of the people of South India. The *Brahmans*, who are identified with *Aryans* and *Sanskrit Scriptures*, had dominated the religious life of the region for many centuries. There have been movements through the centuries to put down the domination, and a few of them assumed the form of new religious orders presided over by religious leaders from other

* 1. Ghurye, G.S. *Indian Sadhus*, p. 54. Popular Book Depot, Bombay. 1953.

2. Hastings, James (ed.). *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*. Vol. XI. p. 186. T. & T. Clark. New York. 192.

3. Kane, P.V. *History of Dharma Sastra*, Vol. II, p. 907, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona. 1945.

castes of the Hindu hierarchy. Significant among them have been three Saiva matas founded between the ninth and thirteenth centuries at Tiruvavaduturai, Dharmapuram and Tiruppanantal in Thanjavur district. They have been the centres of Tamil learning and Saiva Siddhanta philosophy.

Comparable to the Saiva movement in the Tamil districts is the Vira-saiva movement of the twelfth century with its stronghold in Karnataka or Kannada-speaking areas of Peninsular India. Das Gupta says, 'But it is difficult to say at what time the Vira-saiva sect was formed and when it had this special designation. Vira-saivism differs from the Agamic Saivism and the Pasupata system in its philosophy and in its doctrine of *sthala*, the special kind of lingadharana and also in some other ritualistic matters'*.

The Vira-saiva sect is generally called the Lingayat sect and forms a powerful religious and political faction in the present Karnataka State. It has its branches all over the region and elsewhere. Of these, the matas at Balehonnur (Chikmagalur District, Mysore State), Shri Sailam (Kurnool District, Andhra Pradesh), Ujjaini (Bellary District, Mysore State), Varanashi (Banaras in Uttar Pradesh) and Badarikasram (in Himachal Pradesh) are said to be ancient and are called 'Panchachara Matas'. The two Vira-saiva Matas in Chitradurga District, called the Murgharajendra Mata and the Taralabala Mata (Sirigeri), exercise tremendous influence on the members of the sect and are considered to be the most important of the Vira-saiva Matas of the State.

Investigations into the nature and extent of social control exercised by the religious institutions over the several castes of Southern India were started in the first instance at the Sankara Matas at Sringeri (Mysore) and Kumbakonam (Madras). They were extended to the three Saiva Matas at Tiruvavaduturai, Tiruppanantal and Dharmapuram (Madras State). In the course of the investigations at the Sringeri Mata, it was ascertained that the two major Vira-saiva Matas, namely, Murugharajendra and Sirigeri Matas in Chitradurga District, were performing similar functions in regard to the Vira-saiva sects of the region. These two matas were also taken up for study. The work which centred round the two major Brahman matas, three Saiva Matas and two Vira-saiva Matas was commenced in April, 1961, and completed in July, 1961. The two decades following 1940 are considered to be the period when maximum change has taken place in the areas of social participation, such as commensality. Hence, investigations of records were limited to this period. Some of the matas had records dating to the beginning of the century.

Das Gupta, S., *A History of Indian Philosophy.* Vol. V, p. 46 Cambridge University Press, 1955.

An elaborate history of the institutions as is found in this work may seem irrelevant to the main theme of the work. But very little is known about these matas outside the States and region in which they are located. Therefore, it was felt that a history of the institutions was needed to facilitate the proper understanding of the institutions and the purpose fulfilled by them in the community.

II HISTORY OF THE SANKARA MATA—SRINGERI, MYSORE STATE

Sringeri, the headquarters of the taluk bearing the same name, is in the Chikmagalur District of Mysore State. It is situated in the Malnad region on the eastern slopes of the Western Ghats. The taluk is comprised of 23 villages with an area of 45 sq. miles. It was a *jagir* till 1st April, 1959, when it was integrated with the State on the passing of the Inam Abolition Act.

The annual revenue from the taluk at full assessment is Rs. 59,000. Prior to 1st April, 1959, the revenue administration of the taluk was under the management of the Sankaracharya Mata. At present, it is in charge of a *Tahsildar* of the State Government.

The total area under cultivation is 6186.17 acres. Paddy is grown on 4237.25 acres. Arecanut gardens cover 1849.2 acres and sugar-cane 79.30 acres.

The population of the taluk in 1961 was 14,747, of whom 3,307 live in Sringeri town. The total area of the town is 960 acres. It has a Primary, a Middle and a High School. Till the aforementioned date, Sringeri was a State within a State with Shri Jagadguru Sankaracharya as the sole proprietor of the entire *jagir*.

A *mata* (*matam* in Dravidian languages) is generally an abode of *sanyasis* (monks) like a monastery or abbey. Religious institutions established by or in the name of religious leaders belonging to the 'Order of Sanyasis' are called *matas**. They are mainly intended for the propagation of religious teachings as propounded by their respective founders. The *mata* at Sringeri traces its origin to Adi Sankara, also called Sankara Bhagavatpada, the founder of Advaita Philosophy.

According to traditionalists, Adi Sankara is said to have been born in the first century A.D. Historians, however, ascribe the eighth century A.D. (788-820) as the period when the great philosopher swept through the entire length and breadth of India preaching Advaita and establishing *matas* and *peetas*** in the four corners of

*Mata—The retired hut (or cell) of an ascetic (or student) Monier-Williams—A Sanskrit English Dictionary. p. 714. Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1899.

**Peeta—A religious student's seat. Monier-Williams—A Sanskrit English Dictionary. p. 629. Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1899.

India. It was at one of his philosophical debates at Mahishmati that he vanquished Mandana Misra, an 'apostle of ritualism', with the result that the latter became his disciple and a sanyasi. Mandana Misra assumed the yogic name of Sureshwara and was placed in charge of the peeta at Sringeri which is known as Dakshina Amnaya Mata.

Sringeri is held sacred for two reasons : the sage Vibhanda and his son Sringa Rishi of the Ramayana fame are said to have lived there; the holy Tunga river with its source in Gangamula (17 miles from Sringeri) runs through the little town first from the south to the north and after taking a sharp turn to the east turns to the north. (The sacred Ganga takes a similar course at Varanasi.) The vital source of inspiration and reverence at this centre of vedic learning is the Sarada Peeta, the sacred seat established in the name of the Goddess of Learning, Shri Sarada Devi, for whom there is also a temple. Each successive head of Sringeri Mata is referred to as Shri Jagadguru Sankaracharya of Sringeri Sarada Peeta.

Strangely enough, this important seat of learning in the South does not find mention in any of the contemporary works in Tamil or Kannada, except in commentaries in Sanskrit on Sankara's works. According to tradition, Vidyasankara, the holy preceptor of Vidyananya, who was the minister sage of Vijayanagar kingdom, is said to have been the thirteenth in succession to the holy seat. It is Vidyananya who is said to have persuaded the Vijayanagar kings to build a temple in memory of Vidyasankar at Sringeri. Vidyananya wrote many books, one of which is known as Vidyananya Madhaviyam, based on Parasara Smriti. It is the text book used by pandits well versed in the interpretation of Sastras in regard to questions relating to the performance of Vedic rites.

Records of grants dating from the accession of Vijayanagar kings are available in the mata and have been published. Vassals of Vijayanagar Empire, who assumed independence later, Muslim rulers of Mysore, Hyder Ali and his son Tippu, and the ruling scions of Mysore have given endowments and grants to the mata from time to time.

The head of the institution is acknowledged as the religious preceptor of the Hindus in general and Smartha Brahmans in particular of South India. Until recently, he seems to have enjoyed a unique position of being the 'Rajaguru' with all the honours due to a ruling monarch.

Succession to the peeta is a matter of personal choice. It is a long established tradition that one holding the office should choose and nominate his successor. It is his prerogative, but the selection involves a good deal of observation and deliberation. The choice is

made from among the Brahman youths who undergo Vedic studies in the institution. Aptitude for the study of Sastras and leanings towards a life of celibacy are among the principal factors influencing the choice. By personal observation and intuition, the person in office decides the nomination, after which the novitiate undergoes probation. During his probation, he completes his Vedic studies and receives instructions in Sastras, especially in the rules of Sanyasashrama.

The process of selection also involves consultation with the pandits of the institution and a study of the horoscope of the novitiate as to his fitness for the way of life of *Matathipati*. Since the youth chosen has to live the life of a sanyasi throughout his life, renouncing his kith and kin, the permission of his parents is also obtained.

Many of the pontiffs of Sringeri Mata have been selected from the Mulakanadu sect of Telugu-speaking Brahmans of Mysore State. Everyone of the incumbents has to be a celibate throughout his life. On his initiation, he is given a new name (*yoganama*), and he severs connection with his kith and kin. As he is the 'Jagadguru' and above everyone else by virtue of his position as the spiritual head of the community, all his disciples, irrespective of age, prostrate themselves before him and seek his blessings. He does salutation only to God and his preceptor (*guru*). He is required to wear ochre-coloured clothing, called *kavi* or *kashyaya* in local languages. He does not use leather footwear but uses only wooden sandals and carries a staff (*tanda*) as a mark of his state (*sanyasi*).

The daily routine of the *matathipati* is punctuated with certain specific rites, worship and meditation. He is a vegetarian, discarding spices, such as red chillies and tamarind. (In Brahman households in South India, the use of red chillies as an ingredient is prohibited during religious sacrifices, *i.e.*, in offering to gods and to dead ancestors. It is *nisheda*, and black pepper which is an indigenous product of the region is used in its place.) His garment consists of a single piece of cloth, which covers the body as well as the head. He addresses none by any kinship term, for, as a sanyasi, he has no kin. He sits and sleeps on a tiger hide. Austerity in attire, food, and behaviour and a life of strict religious discipline distinguish and raise him above ordinary human being who look to him for moral and spiritual guidance.

Branches of the mata are established and maintained in many parts of the country and religious discourses on the Vedas and Vedantas are held by learned teachers (*pandits*). On the occasion of Shri Sankara's Anniversary (*Sankara Jayanti*), free initiation (*upanayanam*) ceremony is performed for indigent Brahman boys who need

it. In fact, much of the funds is spent for the propagation of Vedic learning.

His Holiness the Jagadguru is the supreme authority in spiritual and other matters concerning the mata. He is assisted by a number of teachers well versed in Hindu scriptures. He consults them on problems involving reference to Dharma-sastras. The mata has a Dharmadhikari (supervisor) who gives his opinions and decisions on all matters involving interpretation of Dharma-sastras. He is paid a small honorarium. All matters of caste, moral conduct and ritual obligations are referred to him either by individuals or by groups.

Every branch of Shri Sankara Mata has an officer called *Mudradhikari* who transmits the cases on to the *Dharmadhikari* wherever the problem referred is of a communal nature. It is he who collects fines (*prayaschitta kanikka* and *tanda*) and deposits them with the mata. A monthly statement of such collections is submitted to the Dharmadhikari. There are three such supervisors—one at the headquarters at Sringeri, one who travels with His Holiness on his tours and a third to represent the other districts. Records are maintained with date of receipt and despatch of each letter. Very often the decision or advice on each case is recorded.

The procedure in dealing with disputes is as follows: When a case is reported by an individual to the Dharmadhikari, the latter writes to the party complained against for explanation or to the appropriate caste *panchayat* to enquire into the matter and furnish details. If the individuals are willing to defray the expenses of the officer, he goes to the village concerned, gives a hearing to the parties in the presence of the elders and the members of the caste *panchayat** and decides the case. When a complaint is made by the caste *panchayat*, it has to be signed or attested by the officers and other members of the *panchayat* on oath in the manner of a sworn statement made before a political authority. When the Dharmadhikari camps at a village, many problems and cases are brought up for his advice and decision. Such cases are not often recorded. Many cases are referred to His Holiness, in camp, where there are scholars conversant with all the four major Dravidian languages. In such cases, the decisions are communicated to the parties direct from the camp without reference to the Dharmadhikari.

In many instances, the caste *panchayats* decide the cases either by levying fines, imposing *kutlu* (boycott) and in extreme cases

*In the villages of Mysore State, each caste *panchayat* has a *yajamana*, literally meaning master, *Buddhivanta*, meaning the wise man, *Gauda*, the chief, and other members called *Balagastaru* (*balaga* means community)

bahishkara (ostracism). When the punishment involves boycott and ostracism, the offender has to obtain a 'certificate of purification' (*suddha patrika*) by performing the necessary expiatory rites (*prayaschitta*). The certificate of purification can be issued only by the mata as the supreme religious authority. In cases of ostracism, a certificate of purification seems to be absolutely necessary for re-admission into caste. A noteworthy feature of the organization is that all castes irrespective of their ritual status and rank in the hierarchy can appeal and get redress from the mata which is a staunch upholder of *varnashrama dharma*. The data will show that even 'Scheduled Caste' groups, such as cobblers, give their allegiance to the mata. It can, therefore, be said that the Sringeri Mata exercises considerable authority among the different caste groups in Mysore in particular and among the Brahman community in general of Mysore and other regions of Peninsular India.

The Government Branch Press of Mysore published in 1927, 'Selections from the Records of the Sringeri Mutt'. 'In 1346 A.D. went forth Harihara Raya's land grant to the Sringeri mutt known as Sringapura grant; it is inscribed on a stone slab still present in Sringeri*'. The stone slab is found outside the Vidyasankara temple, said to have been built by Vidyaranya. The deity worshipped in the temple is called Harihara (a combination of Hari-Vishnu and Hara-Siva); it was also the name of the founder of Vijayanagar Empire. It conveys in free gift, for the undisturbed performance of His Holiness *tagas* and the support of his forty Brahmin attendants including his disciples and others of nine villages as described in the grant belonging to Kelanad in Santaligenad, after making the necessary deductions for cultivation and taxes**.

The volume under reference mentions particulars of grants dating from 1346 A.D. to the period of British administration. Gopinath Rao, while referring to the antiquity of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, mentions that H.L. Rice in his 'Epigraphica Indica' says that the recorded grants of the Sringeri Mata date from 1246 A.D. By the time of Harihara II, Sringeri had grown into a jagir with a permanent revenue of 3003 pagodas as can be seen from the Vidyaranya grant (1386-1387 A.D.) Although, in course of time, the Sringeri Estate swelled considerably, it is generally quoted as one of the 3003 pagodas (*murū savira seeme*) evidently on the basis of its original grants, even as late as 1784-1785 A.D. (the Hindu cyclic year *Krodhi*). Tippu Sultan of Mysore in ordering the exemption of the

*Selection from the Records of Sringeri Mutt—Published by Government Branch Press, Mysore. 1927. Introduction. P. LXIV.

***Ibid.* Introduction. P. IXVI.

Sringeri jagir from taxes (*sunka karika*, etc., taxes and duties) and confirmation of the settlement as a freehold estate, referred to it is *murū savira seeme* (property of 3003 Pagodas). The appellation still continues.

There is also a list of successive Sringeri Jagadgurus commencing from Vidyasankara *alias* Vidyatirtha Swami (1228-1333) upto the present Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Swami who occupies the peeta from 1954. It is clear from these historical records that at least from 1228 A.D. Sringeri Sarada Peeta in Mysore was considered as a seat of learning and its heads as worthy of recognition and reverence by ruling monarchs. The jagir enjoyed by the peeta for about 750 years was abolished in 1950 by the Inam Abolition Act and became a taluk with a tahsildar as the civil administrator.

Many of the honours *birudas* (Sanskrit *viruda* also written as *biruda* and *birada*)* enjoyed by the Jagadgurus of the Sringeri Mata are said to have been conferred by kings and princes who honoured them. A few of them, such as, the *Adda Pallakki*, the *Makara Torana*, *Pancha Kalasa*, *Kirita* and the *Seveta Chatra* survive to this day. (They form part of the royal insignia of Hindu princes.) They are used when His Holiness makes his entry into any village or town (*pattana pravesam*).

At Sringeri, the peeta dedicated to Sri Sarada Devi by Adi Sankara is used twice by the holder of the seat when he is installed by his preceptor (guru), which occasion is called the coronation (*pattabhisekam*), and when he initiates his successor. Both are occasions for great rejoicing, and disciples gather from different parts of India to witness them.

Whenever the country is threatened by serious calamities, His Holiness performs sacrifices (*yagnas*) as prescribed by the Vedas and Sastras for the welfare of humanity. Everyday, at the evening puja, a few lines from each Veda are recited by the pandits and the astronomical data for the following day (*panchanga smarana*) are read by the astrologer (*jyotisha*) at the end of which the latter prays for the welfare of the four divisions of Hindu society (*varnas*), of the political authority, and of the Maharaja of Mysore. This daily routine carried on without any intermission, irrespective of the presence or absence of the leader at Sringeri, reflects the aim of the institution which in the main is intended to preserve religious traditions as laid down by the Hindu scriptures for the welfare of society.

*Monier-Williams—A Sanskrit-English Dictionary. p. 983. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1899.

Feeding of the indigent is supposed to bring merit to the person who does it. At Sringeri, there is a Guest House where free board and lodging are given to all visitors belonging to the higher castes of Hindu hierarchy. In theory, Muslims and Christians are not to be given this facility. In practice, however, no visitor seeking lodging is thrown out. Members belonging to the untouchable castes are not fed within the premises of the Guest House but are supplied with cooked food outside. On a certain day in May, it was noticed that as many as 108 persons were fed and lodged; they belonged to different castes and were from different areas.

III HISTORY OF THE SANKARA MATA—KUMBAKONAM, MADRAS STATE

Kanchi Kamakoti Peeta

The name signifies that it is the seat of Goddess Kamakoti at Kanchi, an abbreviated form of Kancheepuram in Chinglepet District, of Madras State. The greatness of Kanchi or Kancheepuram was the theme on which many Tamil poets of pre-Christian era have sung. It was flourishing city with numerous temples and seats of learning of diverse religious schools. According to Manimekhalai, one of the five epics of the period following the second century A.D. Kanchi is celebrated for having as many as 400 Buddhist *viharas*. It was the capital of the Pallava Kings from fourth century A.D. to the end of seventh century A.D. The fortunes of the city were closely tied up with the political history of the region as it was the prize bone for all kings. It was under the domination of the Cholas, the Pandyas, the Vijayanagar Emperors, the Mahrattas, the Sultans of Delhi and the East India Company. It is counted as one of the seven holy cities of the Hindus. Saivites, Vaishnavaites, Buddhists and Jains vied with one another to establish and build temples to suit their respective creeds.

The authorities of the Sankara Mata at Kancheepuram believe that it was founded by Adi Sankara himself. It is claimed that the first matathipati was Sureshwara Acharya who was also the first matathipati of Sringeri Peeta. Unlike Sringeri, there is no peeta as such at Kanchi. It is supposed to have been installed as a *chakra* in front of the idol of Sri Kamakshi and hence the name Kamakoti Peeta. There is, however, a small temple dedicated to Sureshwara Acharya in the premises of the mata which is separate. The venue of the mata seems to have changed at least thrice, once from Vishnu Kanchi (Little Kancheepuram) to Siva Kanchi (Big Kancheepuram) and again from the latter to Kumbakonam in Thanjavur district.

Gopinath Rao states, 'From a study of these documents it becomes patent that the Kamakoti Peeta was situated in Kancheepuram till at least 1686 A.D. During the earlier part of the stay at Kancheepuram of the svamis of this line they had their mata in Vishnukanchi on the west of the temple of Hastisailanatha (Varadajayvamin). It is only at a comparatively late period a new mata seems to have been erected in Siva Kanchi. Owing to the frequent raids of the Mussalmans on the flourishing town of Kancheepuram, the svamis were put to great inconvenience in the performance of duties and the tradition—a comparatively recent one and consequently worth believing—states that Pratapa Sinha, the Raja of Tanjore, invited the then svami of the Kamakoti peeta to shift his headquarters temporarily to his capital city, Tanjore, and that the invitation was accepted and the svami immigrated into Tanjore with the golden image of Kamakshi. The Tanjore Raja received the svami with due honours, built for him a mata as also a temple for the Goddess Kamakshi. Finding Kumbakonam better suited to the inclinations and duties of the svami, he expressed his desire to spend his time there; a new mata was erected for him at Kumbakonam on the bank of the river Kaveri, which continues for the present time the headquarters of the svamis of the Kamakoti Peeta; thenceforth it began to be known as the Kumbakonam mata of Sankaracharya'.

Note: Regarding the early history of the mata no mention is made of it in literature or inscriptions of the period from the 8th century A.D. to 13th century A.D.

The Chola monarchs who were sponsors of Vedic studies and Vedic religion make no mention of the institution in their inscriptions. Even the commentators on the Four Thousand Sacred Hymns of the Vaishnava saints make no mention of the institution even by way of challenging its doctrines. The Pallava, the Chola and the Pandya, the three great dynasties of South India, were silent about the existence and activities of the institution. There is no record in the mata also regarding any grant or endowment made by any of the kings of the period. It might have been owing to the fact that Sri Sankaracharya Mata was primarily intended for the propagation of Sanskrit learning. Even then, a shadow of doubt passes over the minds of Tamil scholars. Rajaraja I and his famous son Rajendra took immense trouble to establish Brahman colonies in Thanjavur district of which

*Gopinath Rao, T.A., 'Copper Plate Inscriptions Belonging to the Sri Sankaracharya of the Kamakoti Pith', P. 2-3, published by Law Printing Press, Madras, 1916.

Chaturvedimangalam was one. It is strange that they did not utilize or even make mention of an all-out Vedic institution as the Sankaracharya Mata for the propagation of Brahmanic religion and tenets. History is silent until the period of Vijayanagar Kings who gave endowments which are on record.

The claim to remote antiquity is also based on a traditional payment after the harvesting is done in Chinglepet and south Arcot districts. The payment is called *Chikkudaiyar merai*. Merai in Tamil means the portion of crop given to the village officials from the common stock of grain*. 'Chikkudaiyar' is said to mean the authority of Sri Sankaracharya Mata at Kancheepuram. It is a combination of *chik* and *udaiyar*. 'Udaiyar' is again explained as lord, master, name of some castes of cultivators. In Kannada, the word 'chik' is the prefix, meaning smaller or younger and it is a well-known fact that the title 'Udaiyar', or 'Wadeyar', is the one used by the ruling family of Mysore. Venkatadri, son of king Achyuta Rajya of Vijayanagar (1529-1542 A.D.) is also said to have been called by the name Chikkaraya or Chikka Udayar**. In such a context Chikkudaiyar merai will mean the payment made on his behalf. The custom of Chikkudaiyar merai is unique as no such payment seems to have been in vogue in other districts of Madras State.

Sri Sankaracharya Mata at Kumbakonam works on similar lines as those of Sringeri. The essential difference lies in the fact that even in the districts and taluks close to Kumbakonam, it does not seem to wield any noticeable influence on the non-Brahman castes. None of them refers its disputes to the mata for decision; nor does it pay any fee (*kanikka*) to it. Its disciples are mostly drawn from the Smartha Brahmins of the Madras State. The person of the Jagadguru is the pivot round which revolve all activities including the daily puja to Sri Chandramouliswara (an aspect of Siva said to have been worshipped by Adi Sankara and his successors).

In keeping with the spirit of the times, the Jagadguru is interested in promoting Tamil learning as well as Sanskrit. He has a *Dharma-sabha* to guide him on matters of topical interest. On June 4th, 1961, Sunday, a meeting of pandits proficient in Sastras took place. On that occasion, one of them posed for discussion the propriety of maternal cross-cousin marriage (*matula suta vivaha*). It is not an approved form according to writers like Kumarila Bhatta. The discussion was carried on in Sanskrit. The conclusion was that it was sanctioned by traditional usage (*sishtachara*) and was, therefore, in conformity with the social sentiments of the groups practising it.

*Tamil Lexicon, Vol. VII, pp. 33-54, published by University of Madras 1936.

**Heras, Henry. The Aravidu Dynasty of Vijayanagar, p. 3.

IV HISTORY OF THE THREE SAIVA MATAS—THANJAVUR DISTRICT, MADRAS STATE

Saivism as expounded by the Agamas has its stronghold in the Tamil land. (It may be remembered that Siva is regarded as the god of the Tamil land.*) Tirumular, a resident of Tiruvavaduturai (popularly called Tiruvaduturai) in the Mayuram taluk of Thanjavur district, is said to be the earliest author of Saiva Siddhanta works in Tamil. It is said that he lived in the first century A.D. Of the twelve collections called the Sacred Vedas (Tirumurai) the hymns of Tirumular form the tenth. These twelve books are in the form of anthologies of sacred hymns while the Sastras are fourteen in number and are called the books revealing the Truth (*Meykanda Nulgal*).

The Saiva Mata of Tiruvavaduturai claims Tirumular and Meykanda Thevar as its founder and disciple respectively. The matas at Dharmapuram and Tiruppanantal claim umaraguru as their founder. Of the latter, Dharmapuram is the parent institution, for Tiruppanantal Mata does not have the authority to initiate or recruit disciples. These matas are popularly called *Adhinam* and the matathipati as *Adhinakarta* or *Pandara Sannidhigal***. The institutions are primarily seats of learning, especially Tamil learning centering round Saiva Siddhanta system of philosophy. A form of initiation known as *Siva-diksha* is given by the heads of Tiruvavaduturai Adhinam to such as desire it. Though these institutions are expected to cater to all Saivites, it is only the vegetarian castes among the non-Brahmans that take Siva-diksha and perform the rituals prescribed by the Agamic Scriptures. These groups are generally called Saivas denoting thereby their affiliation to the Agamic form of Saivism as expounded in the Saiva Siddhanta works and also their preference to vegetarianism which is considered superior. Vegetarian diet itself is called *Saiva chappadu* (Saiva meal) and vegetarians, 'Saivar', irrespective of caste.

The heads of the three institutions are practising celibacy to the end of their lives. The office is not hereditary. The Selection is entirely dependent on the merit and spiritual attainment of the selected one.

*Manikka Vasagar, as celebrated saint of Tamil land, says : "*Tennadudaiya Sivane Barri : en nattavarkum Iraiva Porri*". 'Sennec'u'—southern land; 'udaiya'—who holds; 'Sivane'—Oh Siva; 'Porri'—be praised; 'en'—all; 'nattavarkum'—people of lands; 'Iraiva'—Oh Lord; 'porri'—be praised.

***Pandaram* in Tamil indicates a religious mendicant. *Sannidhigal* in an honorific of a person's presence.

V HISTORY OF THE TWO VIRA-SAIVA MATAS AT CHITRADURGA AND SIRIGERI, MYSORE STATE

The Vira-saiva Mata at Chitradurga, headquarters of the district of the same name, is popularly called Murghi Mata, an abbreviation of Sri Murgharajendra Mata. The mata was founded by a Vira-saiva saint called Murgharajendra*. It is said to have been founded during the time of the Palayagar chieftaincy in Mysore, *i.e.*, about 400 years ago.

In his 'Introduction to the Coorg Inscriptions' in 'Epigraphica Carnatica,** Lewis Rice writes that 'the earlier inscriptions show that the Jain faith was exclusively the State or Court religion at first. Then followed the Saiva and Vaishnava creeds; and lastly the Vira-saiva or Lingayat form of 'Saivis'. Inscriptions Nos. 12, 13 and 14 dated 1782, 1796 and 1816 make mention of endowments by the Coorg kings, (Kodagu Rajas) to the Murghi Mata. At the time of the grant in 1796, Murghi Mata seems to have had several branches in Mysore and Coorg States. At present, it has branches in almost all the important towns of Karnataka and one at Varanasi. They say that the priests in Badarikasrama are of the Vira-saiva sect.

The working of the mata is very similar to the other Hindu religious institutions in the State. The Head of the Order is selected by the one in office. It is not hereditary. The Head is the sole manager dominant sects of the State and the disciples are spread far and wide in it. These matas have established free hostels for students all over the region.

Of all the Saiva orders discussed so far, Vira-saiva sect is the only one that advocates a casteless society. It was founded with a view to eradicating caste and caste differences that divide Hindu society. Theoretically, any person who is initiated into the Vira-saiva faith becomes a member of a religious group and not of a caste. The initiation takes a concrete form for the initiated wear the *linga* suspended from a string which is worn round the neck. Unlike other Hindu Groups, the Vira-saiva sect gives equal ritual status to women, who are also eligible for initiation. The initiation called Sivadiksha or Lingadharana is absolutely necessary for every individual of the sect. It is the physical

*The head of the Murghi Mata explained that the word is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Murgha' meaning the destroyer of the demon Murgha. It is also denotative as the founder used twisted articles such as the staff, clothes, etc., 'murki' from the word 'murukku', meaning to twist.

**Rice, H. Lewis, Epigraphica Carnatica, Vol. I, p. 2. Coorg Inscriptions. Published by Supdt., Govt. Press, Madras, 1914.

contact with the linga that rids a person of all pollution, and therefore, the more orthodox among them perform the lingadharana even to the child in the womb in the belief that it will not incur pollution at birth. Since every infant, child and adult has been initiated the five kinds of pollution, viz., of birth, menstruation, contact with defiling objects, and of look, do not count in their ritual life. The Vira-saivas are strict vegetarians, as non-killing is one of the fundamental precepts of the order.

The casteless order of the Vira-saiva is not, however, completely free from the trammels of casteism of the other groups. In practice, it is the vegetarian castes that are admitted for initiation. Social distance as existing among the other castes is observed by the members of the sect also ; for instance, a Kuruba who ranks low in the hierarchy of the caste structure of the region is not permitted to enter a Vira-saiva house. The alleged reason is his dietary habit, for a Kuruba is a non-vegetarian.

The heads of the two Vira-saiva matas admitted that Vira-saivas regard themselves as a caste and are so regarded by the other caste groups of the region. In marriage also, care is taken to see that alliances are welded between families of the same or identical caste rank in the Hindu hierarchy. In principle, the Vira-saivas have no commensality or ritual contact with any external group. The initiation, that is, lingadharana, forms the only criterion for admission to the group. Social segregation had been even more rigorous in the past when no Vira-saiva could utilize the service of any other uninitiated caste, such as barbers and washermen. According to the tenets of the sect, no occupation entails pollution unless it involves killing. The attitude of the pontiffs towards killing is almost identical with that of the Buddhists. At Sirigeri, the pontiff was asked if he did not consider it as sinful when a cobbler works on the hide of animals killed by others. He was of opinion that no sin as such could be attached to the cobbler as he is not directly responsible for the taking away of life. Since every Vira-saiva carries the linga on his person, temple-worship does not form an essential part of his religion.

The Taralabala Jagadguru Mata at Sirigeri

The Taralabala Jagadguru Mata at Sirigeri is said to have been founded by a Harijan by name Marulappa, resident of Ujjaini in Bellary district of Mysore State. The Taralabala Mata cannot initiate new recruits. It is a branch mata and can only give the Sivadiक्षा to Vira-saivas. It does not differ from the other mata in its tenets or practices.

The present head of the mata is, however, a dynamic person eager for change. There is a High School for boys at Sirigeri village built by the old boys of the institution. At present, it is a multi-purpose school. A dispensary, co-operative society, and a free hostel for students of all communities are some of the features of Sirigeri village. The head of the institution is eager and anxious to utilize every facility afforded by the government for the betterment of Sirigeri village in particular and Vira-saiva sect in general. His opponents accuse him of using his influence in consolidating the Vira-saiva sect as a powerful political party and thereby increasing his own power. He finds the casteless, pollutionless tenets of his sect as useful to popularise his ideas. He is an authority in all the nearby villages and many cases involving social and caste infractions are decided by him on the spot.

The Vira-saiva matas act as advisory institutions on questions relating to offences against the traditional code. A kind of cursory record is maintained at the Murghi Mata regarding the number and caste of individuals admitted into the Vira-saiva fold. The head of the Murghi Mata said that generally members of the two non-Brahman castes of Kunchitiga Okkaligas* and Namadari are admitted for initiation. The manner of conversion presents an interesting sociological material.

Persons who desire to embrace Vira-saivism have to begin practising its tenets, such as daily worship (*puja*), vegetarianism, teetotalism and other such restrictions on diet and social contact. They apply to the Vira-saiva priest (*jangama*) for formal *lingadharana* initiation. If there happens to be a branch mata at the village or the neighbouring one, the application is made to the *matathamurthi* (representative of the mata). The priest or the representative forwards the application to the headquarters mata with the necessary details regarding the number, age, sex and caste of the applicants along with the names and relationship of the kin of the latter who have already taken the initiation. It is also necessary that the *grama mukyastaru* (village elders), such as, the *yajamana*, endorse the application regarding the applicant's earnestness and fitness for initiation.

The normal procedure is to fix the day of initiation and a central place for the function. A representative is sent from the headquarters mata. Some of them are roving *gurukkal* preceptors and perform the initiation even for small groups of two and three individuals. Each individual, man, woman or child, pays a fee of Rs. 2.00 per head. Part of the fees is paid to the officiating priest and the rest to the mata.

The Kunchitiga Okkaliga is a sub-sect of Okkaligas—an agricultural caste. The Namadari is a Vaishnava caste. Non-Vira-saiva sects allege that these two groups are non-vegetarians and continue to be so, though surreptitiously.

The fact that individuals or groups of individuals changing the faith of their forefathers to a new one does not involve merely a change in the religious affiliation of the persons concerned but an adjustment to be made and accepted in the village structure. It is, therefore, necessary that the village headman as the political authority and the elders as guardians of the village tradition are required to endorse the application. The Vira-saivas as a vegetarian caste hold a comparatively high rank in the caste hierarchy. Kunchitigas and Namadaris, who normally rank lower, have to be assigned the higher caste status by reason of their admission into the Vira-saiva sect.

Any haphazard conversion is certain to create confusion and disorder in the village community. Each village, in spite of political declarations, is a strong integrated organism built mainly on the position and occupation of the different castes living in it. If, however, individuals adopt alien faiths, such as Islam or Christianity, the village organization is not disturbed to the same extent, for these religions have always been treated as aliens outside Hindu structure. But the Vira-saiva sect is not regarded as 'other religion'. It is a part of Hindu structure, and, therefore, it has its allotted place in the Hindu society of the village. Any repletion or depletion causing a movement of individuals or groups of individuals involves social mobility, which, in turn, is certain to disturb the equilibrium of the village caste structure. It also means that the castes in the upper and lower ranks of those admitted to Vira-saivism will have to accept the upgrading of the individuals and groups. Indiscriminate admission of recruits by Vira-saivas and permission given by village authorities may eventually lead to rift and dissension in village life. Therefore, it is necessary to curb the over-enthusiasm of persons to adopt a religious order which will give them a higher caste status. It is for these reasons that the consent of the village authorities is insisted upon for permitting individuals to move up in the scale, for it is they who are supposed to ensure the security of the converts in their new status.

VI CASE RECORDS OF SANKARA MATA, SRINGERI : DISCUSSION ON SIX TYPICAL CASES

The following chapters contain copies of letters and a statement regarding caste cases received and dealt with by Sankara Matas of Sringeri and Kumbakonam and by the Vira-saiva Matas of Karnataka. The reference made to the Sringeri Mata will be dealt with in the first instance in this chapter. They comprise of letters received from individuals and caste panchayats of the various parts of South India covering a wide range of caste questions. From the innumerable records made available by the mata, forty-three typical letters were

selected for reproduction here. To begin with, six cases which furnish a clear idea of the type of complaints referred to the mata and the manner in which they were disposed of will be discussed.

Case No. 1

It was a case of alleged infanticide. The woman (accused) was exonerated by the court. She could not, however, escape from the stigma imposed by her caste people. They took the matter to the notice of the Dharmadhikari of Sringeri Mata urging that she should not be allowed to participate in the life of the community without the sanction of the mata. The community members had also placed her mother and her children under ban for having had contact with her. Being appraised of the complaint, the woman wrote a letter to the Dharmadhikari expressing her repentance and her willingness to undergo any kind of expiation that might be imposed to absolve her from the sin and the stigma. A regular inquiry into the matter was conducted by the Dharmadhikari. Statements from a number of persons were recorded and a decision passed. Relevant correspondence on the case is furnished below :

Letter No. 1

Applicants—S, wife of K, and K's son R

Place—S

Caste—Yadava

Date—14-7-1940

I have been accused of wrong conduct by the members of my caste. A case for infanticide was lodged in the Sessions Court and a verdict of 'not guilty' was passed by the Court. But our caste members require that I should undergo expiation in accordance with the orders of Sringeri Mata. As the Guru of Lokacharya Mata (Sagar) is absent, I request the Sringeri Mata to kindly prescribe the necessary *prayaschitta* and release me from the *vak dosha*. All the expenses incurred by the mata in this connection will be borne by me.

Letter No. 2

Date—20-3-1941

Members of the villages, T, L, M, K and A, having met at T. sat in panchayat over the application of S. She, being a widow, gave birth to a child and accepted her guilt to our council (*balaga*). Our decision in this case is as follows : The above crime cannot be expiated in any manner whatsoever. So we have decided to excommunicate (*vaja*) her from our sect. The applicant, however, implores that she should be purified and somehow or other be accepted into our sect. So we have told her that unless Sringeri Mata informs us

after consulting the Dharma-sastras she cannot be accepted into our fold. We have communicated our decision to her accordingly.

Since the applicant implores that her mother and children, who are placed under ban for communicating with her, should be accepted into our sect, we have decided as follows : Her mother and children were living with her under the same roof. So our caste members have expressed the opinion that these persons can be accepted after the requisite purification is done. (1) These persons should purify the house by plastering it with cowdung. (2) All the earthen utensils should be thrown out. (3) These persons should bathe in the holy place of the Varada Mula (the place from which the river Varada takes its source). (4) These persons should take the *chakra* and *mudra-dharana* of the Guru Mata. (5) They should take the holy Water Blessing (*thirtha prasadam*). (6) They must perform *punyarchana* for the house. (7) They should pay a fine of Rs. 11 to the community (*balaga*). All these items of purification should be performed to the satisfaction of their caste members in T., within a month's time. If they comply with these, it has been decided to lift the band (*kattu*) and readmit them into the sect. These have been communicated to our castemen at T., and other villages. These persons should also give offerings of fruits, coconuts to Anjaneya devasthanam at S. and also pay for three seers of oil for the temple lamps.

(Signed by the members and presided by L.L.)

Letter No. 3

Statement of L.T. (Forester) on the case of S.

Camp—T

Date—17-6-1941

S, wife of K, the Yajamana, Buddhivanta and other elders of the community from T. have written to mata regarding the case of S. We had assembled our sabha, and having been convinced that the slander (*apavada*) regarding her was proved, decided to excommunicate (*parityaga*) her. S admitted her guilt and implored that she should be expiated. As there is no one competent to give advice from our mata, i.e., Lokacharya Mata at S, we have requested the Sringeri Mata to do the same. If the Sringeri Mata orders the mode of prayaschitta, we agree to abide by it and accept her into our sect. It is my opinion that such sinners should be given prayaschitta. How far she can live and participate as a member of our sect has to be decided by the mata and we shall abide by that decision. I am not aware of any such precedent in our caste. The mata should give us instructions even as to how her death ceremonies are to be performed.

Statement of Dharmadhikari of Sringeri Mata giving decision on the case of S.

Sri Jagadguru Samasthanam of Sringeri. Office of the Dharmadhikari—Sringeri Mata :

Para 1. A copy of the resolution passed by the wise elders of the community and elders assembled in T on written request dated 14-7-1940 of one S, of Yadava community, resident of U of S with a plea to purify and expiate her sin was brought to the notice of the mata.

Para 2. In pursuance of the instructions of His Holiness a spot enquiry was held at S, giving due intimation to all concerned. On 17-3-1941, the said S submitted another memorandum and her deposition was also recorded. She admitted that she had requested the brothers of her community to arrange for her expiation and also told of their suggestion to get permission from the Sringeri Mata to enable them to consider her request. She also admitted that she was subjected to molestation and that she, being a member of a large family, prayed to the mata to permit her to be expiated by prayaschitta.

Para 3. There are four documents forwarded with her memorandum sent earlier for our perusal : (a) application submitted by S, (b) an undertaking given by S, expressing her willingness to abide by the decision of the elders of her community; (c) her replies to queries put by her relatives; and (d) the resolution passed in the assembly of the community elders and relatives.

Para 4 and 5. These documents being copies, L, son of R of T, and M S, son of H, were jointly examined on 20-3-1941 regarding them. They confirmed that the facts contained in these were correct and that, in case, the authorities of the mata require the originals they would furnish them (these two men were probably community headmen).

Para 6. The matter related in the fourth document is as follows the above-mentioned sin does not appear to be pardonable nor redeemable and hence we have excommunicated S but as she has very humbly

requested us to allow her to come back to our fold, we have decided to consider her request only in case she brings a letter from the Sringeri Mata permitting her according to Dharma-sastras to do so.

Para 7. A joint statement of the elders of the community was also taken binding them to abide by the decision of the mata in the matter. They also agreed that a decision of the mata was needed as the issue involved a reference to the Dharma-sastras and that the elders (*katta yajamana*) of the community and in particular L T son of L M (forester by profession) and resident of J should also be consulted by the authorities of the mata before a decision is given, which of course will be followed by all of them.

Para 8. From these records it is evident that all these people desire a ruling from the mata on this matter. There is no doubt that S has committed a sin by transgressing the community's code. In addition to it, she was also alleged to have committed infanticide though this charge could not be proved by the police in the Sessions Court. She cannot, however, free herself from this guilt.

Para 9. But she is repenting very much for her lapse committed under duress and because of this intense repentance of her sin and sense of deep sorrow, she has requested her community elders for expiation, who in their turn have rightly requested us for religious guidance in the circumstances. It is not at all proper to justify any religious transgression. Though the traditional affairs of a particular community are in their hands yet the attitude of the community elders in seeking a verdict from the mata is very much appreciate and, therefore, Sri Mata (His Holiness) has directed that a ruling should be given according to Dharma-sastras.

Para 10. There is no doubt that S has committed a great sin. A terrible life of hell and the worst possible rebirths to the sinner as well as those communing with such a sinner are ordained by the Dharma-sastras.

Para 11. Nor all such sins according to the intensity of guilt and in accordance with the moral code

of the caste like the Brahman and others expiation and in case of prohibited transgression (*agathika gathi*) excommunication from the community have been prescribed in the Dharma-sastras.

It is the direction of the Sastras to excommunicate a person only when no other mode is prescribed for that particular transgression and not in cases where expiation for sins has been prescribed.

Para 12. Such expiation should be sought from wise and elderly persons of great learning leading a sacred life, after offering them with devotion presents as part of the expiation process. "The sins of people are washed away by the mere words expressed by such great people whose words are sacred like sacred water" (*Tesham vakyada kinaiva shudyanti malina jahaha*). As per his statement, sinners are purified by the orders of the Guru.

Para 13. In the present case the memorandum has been accepted by the Sri Mata to decide the disputed issue whether S is to be excommunicated by her community or whether she can be allowed to remain in the community after expiation done according to Dharma-sastras.

Para 14. Parasara Madhava Dharma-sastra compiled by Sri Vidyaranya and accepted by this mata as the authoritative text in such matters deals with the particular question called *jarena jana vedgartikam mriti vyaktigati pathan* (sinful conception in adultery clears away with the death of the child before its birth or by its delivery). It is also said in this chapter that except in the case of Brahman, women of all other communities can be purified by expiation in such cases. *Antharyasmi tu ya nari krameiva akramya kamena prayaschittam nakurya sa yavad garbhana nisrataha*. (The woman has conceived as a result of her willing or unwilling contact with the seducer should not be permitted for expiation until she is cleared of her conception.) It means that such a woman is entitled to expiation after the delivery. Prayaschitta has also been ordered in an explanatory note on the *sloka*. *Kritsnam chandrayanam smritam. Evam voshidapi charitabratah punah sirkarani yay natu*

dooshyat na parityajet. It means clearly that such a woman should be taken in after due expansion and should not be abandoned.

In addition, all the twenty-four *Mata Granthas*, i.e., moral codes of the different sects prescribe only *prayaschitta* for a repentant and family woman having children and excommunication has been condemned. Therefore, expiation is the proper remedy in this case.

From the proceedings in question, it is evident that S was subjected to unwilling adultery. This is her first offence. She is a woman having children. She is very much repentant. She has requested all the elders of her community and the mata for expiation. The authorities of the mata have decided to permit *prayaschitta* to her after accepting the fees as part of the expiation process.

The following process has to be adopted by S in detail for freeing herself of all sin; going to Gokarna with all the elders of her community; observing a fast for three days after which shaving her head and bathing in the sea one hundred and eight times and taking *panchagavya*. In addition to this, she should also observe all the other formalities as may be imposed on her by the elders of her community.

She may be expiated. So order authorities of the mata.

By order of the State of Sringeri
(Sd) Dharmadhikari

Dated 20-12-1941

Camp—8

Copies sent to :

1. S
2. Local community elders of T
3. Shri L T (Forester), dated 28-12-1941.

It is evident from the correspondence that the Yadava (cowherd) caste of Shimoga District regarded the Sringeri Mata as the authority competent to decide on issues such as expiation. The caste council though localised seems to be responsible to a few elders who are designated as *katte yajamanaru* (community elders) and it was absolutely incumbent on any party to obtain the concurrence of these

community elders in deciding any question relating to transgression, excommunication or acceptance into the caste fold (ref. para 7 of the mata's proceedings). When one of the elders was away from T, his statement had to be obtained later at T, paras 4 and 5 reveal the fact that written statements and records relevant to a case were in the custody of two men who are referred to as community headmen. The caste council at the first sitting seems to have decided on excommunication (ref. para 6). Later, however, on the appeal of S it was decided to consider her case but only if she obtained permission from the Sringeri Mata for expiation.

In the case quoted, the applicant could appeal to Sringeri Mata only with the specific consent of the caste council. The mata acted on the recommendation of the caste council for para 10 of the memorandum express clearly the attitude of the mata in such cases. It says that it is the caste council and the elders who are the competent authorities to deal with religious transgressions in the traditional mode and that, therefore, the attitude of the elders in seeking advice from the mata, is very much appreciated. Again, at the end of the memorandum, it is stated that all the twenty-four Mata Granthas recommend only expiation and not excommunication for a family woman. It is significant that the Dharmadhikari of Sringeri Mata who was requested to give a decision on a matter involving reference to the Dharma-sastras should take into account the rules laid down in the codes of the other sects also to support his opinion.

It is noteworthy that the caste panchayat itself decided the mode of expiation in the case of the mother and children of the guilty. The boycott imposed on these persons seems to stem from a different motive. They stand on a separate footing being not personally involved in the moral transgression. But the sin committed by the guilty persons overtakes, like any other contagion, the close relatives of that person, though it is more easily washable. By giving them an opportunity to free themselves from the stigma, the community attempts to isolate the guilty individual, cutting away contact from all her relatives. The woman in question is treated as a defiled person. Moreover, the pressure of boycott on her kith and kin has a coercive effect to make her confess her guilt and seek for a remedy. Rejection by members of a community has far-reaching consequences, such as the closing of marital alliances, non-co-operation of other relatives on ritual occasions and, in fact, social isolation. It is, therefore, necessary that the immediate relatives should also undergo expiation. A moral transgression is regarded as a social infraction affecting the life of the community.

(I met the accused S and her daughter's husband at S. in October, 1962, and also a few other members of the caste. They told me that the woman had, since the decision made by the Sringeri Mata, been living as a full-fledged member of her community without any social disabilities. Her three daughters were married. The mata, however, imposed a condition saying that as and when the marriage of any of her children was contemplated, the negotiation should be approved by the caste council of S and the approval communicated by the caste elders to the mata. The condition was complied with.)

Case No. 2 The case refers to one C of goldsmith caste (*Akkasala* or *Visvakarma jati*). The woman in question was a resident of G. A complaint had been lodged by one G resident of S town, to the Gauda, Buddhivanta and other elders of the *Visvakarma jati* of Sri Kalika Parameswari temple, regarding the conduct of the said C. He had requested the panchayat to make enquiries into the matter and take necessary action.

A letter dated 30-11-1964 written by one S complaining bitterly against the lapses of the Visvakarma jati panchayat of S town contains a reference to the above case. Another letter in the form of an interdict laid by the caste panchayat on D, the husband of the accused and his brother shows that a complaint was made by the brother of C to the caste panchayat.

The third letter in the series is addressed to the Dharmadhikari of the Sringeri Mata by C. It is dated 23-9-1941. The fourth letter dated 1-12-1941 is from D, C's husband, to the same authority in reply to the letter's memorandum dated 23-11-1941.

The complaint of S dated 30-11-1941, quoted above, shows that the caste panchayat was in favour of D's taking his wife back. There is no record to prove whether the panchayat took the decision in consultation with the authorities of the Sringeri Mata.

It is evident from a memorandum sent by the Dharmadhikari of the mata to the goldsmith panchayat of S. town, dated 24-7-1938, that the Sringeri Mata had authority over the affairs of the community in question.

Reference No. 1 Accused C, wife of K. D.

Cattle : *Akkasala* or *Visvakarma jati* (goldsmith). The reference forms an item of a petition sent by one S complaining against the lapses of the Visvakarma jati panchayat of S town. He writes that C, wife of K D, left her home for about a month in the company of another man. Later, she returned to her maternal home

and filed a suit against her husband which was dismissed. The caste members, instead of placing a stricture on her, are not only encouraging her but are compelling her husband to take her back.

Letter No. 2

Sri Banni Ma Kali's disciples : Visvakarma castemen of S town : The resolution to boycott passed by the Gauda, Buddhivanta and the ten members of the caste panchayat. On 16-3-1938 G N's son, K (brother of the accused), complained against N.D. and A. We, having met on 16-3-1938, sent word through our peon, *jalagara* (fisherman) H, to D to be present at the meeting. But he disregarded the notice from the caste panchayat, tore it and refused to attend the meeting at the Kalika Parameswari temple. Therefore, we have imposed a ban on N D, his younger brother D, and A. Till they prove their innocence to the panchayat, no member of the caste shall have any contact with them (*samparkka madotu*). If anyone does so, he or she will be fined Rs. 10 by the panchayat.¹

Letter No. 3 from the accused C addressed to the Dharma-dhikari of Sringeri Mata dated 23-9-1941.

'Four years ago A came to live with my husband. There were many quarrels after she came. Therefore, I had to come and live in my brother's house. As I am left without any means, I request that the mata authorities will advise my husband and send him back to me. My caste members have refused to come to my help. Since my husband beat me, I had filed a suit against him which was dismissed.'

Letter No. 4 (written by C's husband to the Dharmadhikari in reply to the letter's memorandum dated 23-11-1941).

'It is true that C is my wife. She has left a son C aged 2½ years. She has left home often. Her conduct has not been good. She filed a suit against me in the Small Causes Court at S, which was dismissed as false. She, having insulted me in many ways, has appealed to your mata. I agree to take her back only on the condition that my caste panchayat, after enquiry into the matter, orders me with your approval to do so. I cannot disobey the orders of Sri Mata, but I request that the matter be placed before the elders of my community.'

Letter No. 5 (memorandum dated 24-7-1938 sent by the Dharmadhikari to the Akkasala panchayat of S town. It throws light on the authority of the mata over the affairs of the panchayat).

1. The Gauda, Buddhivanta and Yajamana and members of the *samiti* as approved by the mata shall enquire into all cases relating to their caste affairs and shall decide accordingly.

2 For every enquiry, the Gauda, Buddhivanta, Yajamana and at least two other members shall form the quorum.

3 In case the Gauda and Buddhivanta are absent, the Yajamana and all other members shall be present. All decisions taken on the occasion shall be signed by all those present and the decision communicated to the Gauda, Buddhivanta and the mata.

4 The proceedings of each meeting shall be recorded.

5 Whatever complaint is brought before the *samiti* the latter shall make enquiries impartially within ten days of the receipt of the complaint and the details of the enquiry and the decision taken thereon shall be reported to the mata.

6 If the case is of a serious nature, it shall be reported to the mata and the decision of the latter accepted.

7 If, in any case, a complainant feels that the decision taken by the *samiti* is not just, he shall report the matter to the mata with his reasons, and the decision of the later shall be accepted as final.

8 Normally, complaints presented before the local *samiti* shall be decided by the members of the *samiti* elected by the local community.

9 In case it is not possible for the local *samiti* to take decision, the matter shall be referred to the mata.

10 Penalties imposed for any offence shall be based on the nature of the offence, the status of the offender and with due regard to the current trends (*kala dharma*). Of the fine collected, the amount representing preceptor fine (*guru tanda*) shall be sent aside and reported to the mata. Fines shall be levied on the offender with the approval of the mata.

11 If any ban is imposed on an offender, the *iyotisha* (astrologer-cum-priest) shall be informed of it for his services (*havya kavya*). The headquarters and branch *samitis* should also be informed of the ban.

12 Any offender who has been placed under excommunication (*bahishkara*) should not be allowed to change his creed (*mata*) and cross over to another creed. Even those who are already under a ban shall be persuaded to keep firmly to their creed. It is the specific duty of the *samiti* to see that no member, leaves the (Hindu) fold.

13 Those who have not paid the customary fee (*kanikka*) to the Sringeri State shall be given notice. The samiti shall report all matters of such lapses to the samasthanam and shall abide by its decision.

14 If at any time the Sri Mata is convinced that the Gauda, Buddhivanata and yajamana are not conscientiously performing their duties, the mata shall cancel their *sannads* and appoint fresh officers to the post.

15 Every member shall abide by the above rules. If any one does not do so, he incurs the displeasure of the mata and loses the benefit of the blessings (*asirvada*) of His Holiness Sri Jagadguru Swami.

Letter No. 6 (copy of the complaint made by S to the Dharmadhikari of Sringeri Mata). The writer calls himself as belonging to Visvabrahman caste.

'It was ordered by the Sri Mata when you (Dharmadhikari) camped at S that there should be a panchayat consisting of ten members and that it should be in charge of the caste affairs. An agreement to the effect was drawn up and signed in the ledger book by all the members of the caste present at the temple of Banni Ma Kalika Parameswari. In spite of it, there are lapses in the conduct of the panchayat and the following cases can be cited as examples :

(i) A case from Chikmagalur was brought to the notice of the panchayat. No proper expiation was imposed on the party. In spite of it, the members of our caste are continuing contact by participating in functions, such as marriage, owing to the wealthy position of the party concerned.

(ii) V, a widow residing at R of this town conceived. Though a ban was imposed on her, some of the caste members maintain social contact with her.

(iii) N, younger brother of HV residing in this town, lived in the company of Bedar for 20 years. No proper expiation or panchagavya was performed for him. He is participating in all the social and religious functions of the caste. The ten panchayat members do not seem to be aware of his movements.

(iv) V's younger daughter of I village, K taluk, a widow, conceived and delivered a child at the Medical Hospital at D. Some of our caste members had gone to the latter place and ascertained the fact. She is now living with M, son of GS. There is no ban on any member eating in her house.

(v) C, wife of D (accused in case No. 2) having left her home for about a month in the company of another man returned to her maternal village. She filed a suit against her husband which was dismissed. The caste members are not only encouraging her but compelling her husband to take her back.

(vi) S of A has three sons and two daughters. The elder daughter left her husband and lives with another man. She is eating and living with her mother's family whenever there is an opportunity. The younger one is a widow but is living with a man of a different caste. As we became apprehensive of their constant contact with their mother, we have placed a ban on the latter. Still, some members of our caste seem to maintain social contact with the family. (The accused in this item is the subject of case No. 3).

(vii) S, daughter of P, is a bad character. She was not invited by anyone in any social function for the last ten or twelve years. But of late, D is inviting her for every function in his house. It is because of such persons that our caste (*kula*) has come to a state of decline.

Though we have represented these matters to the Panchayat, no reply has been received. A few are deriding us saying we have not enough to eat. So what have we to do with a panchayat? It is true that we do not have enough to eat, but the problems before us seem to be many. These are the persons who are obstructing the prosperity of Visvakarma sect. So it is our request that such matters should as far as possible be decided by you. If you hesitate to do so, we are certain that the caste (*kula*) will decline. This is our request.

In the case under consideration, the ban placed on KD, his accomplice A and brother D, was a penal measure taken against them for contempt of the panchayat. The offenders in question not only abused the messenger but tore the summons of the panchayat and refused to attend the meeting. Therefore, the panchayat had placed a ban depriving them of participation in the social life of the community. It is significant that the panchayat decided to communicate the imposition of the ban to their caste people in the neighbouring villages through similar panchayats there. Again, an individual's social behaviour is circumscribed by the values and expectations of the group of which he is a unit. To maintain the values system unbroken, they feel it necessary that the caste should act as a unified force against an offender. In the case of D, the ban seems to have had the desired effect, for, in his letter to Sringeri Mata, he says

that he would take his wife only if his caste panchayat ordered him to do so.

The cases reported by S in Letter no. 6 above represent a wide range of offences from personal morals to contact with prohibited persons and groups. These are classed as infractions of the social order entailing the disapprobation of the community. Economic disability seems to be regarded as a corrosive factor in caste solidarity. On the one hand, the poorer sections of the community seem to be more concerned about their elementary needs than about the morale of their caste. On the other hand wealth and a better economic standing in the community seem to encourage some to disregard the caste conventions. Even a caste panchayat, which is supposed to be the custodian of the moral and social behaviour of all the members of the caste, sometimes winks at offences committed by wealthy members. This is clear from the apprehensions expressed in the petition from S.

Case No. 3

This case refers to a ban imposed on a woman belonging to the Visvakarma jati.

A social boycott in a small endogamous group has the effect of interfering with prospective marriage alliances. So the writer of the letter is obviously worried and anxious that she should be given the original status in the caste which alone would enable her to find suitable brides for her sons from her caste.

The writer of the following letter dated the 12th December, 1941 is the accused in item no. 6 of Case no. 2.

'My husband died ten years ago. I have three sons and two daughters. My daughters have quarrelled with me and are living separately. My caste men have avoided us and do not invite us to participate in any social function, such as marriage. Though I have appealed to our caste panchayat again and again to state the reason for the boycott, they have not given any. When I pressed that the caste panchayat should meet to discuss the reason, they have postponed it. As my sons are sufficiently grown up, I have to arrange for their marriages. A social boycott of my family is extremely harmful in this case. I, therefore, request the Sri Mata authorities to enquire into the matter and do the needful. I agree to abide by its decision.'

Case No. 4

The case is of a different nature. The accused belonged to the caste of mendicants (Joshi). N. Bhavaję seems to have been involved in a quarrel with his younger brother in which he was struck with *chappals*. Therefore, he incurred chappal pollution (*padaraksha dosha*). The pollution seems to have extended to his family also. The matter was reported to Sringeri Mata which addressed the following letter to the caste council of his village on the 5th April 1952, prescribing the expiation to be performed by him. There is an endorsement from the priest of the village to the effect that the orders of the mata have been carried out.

Copy of letter no. 1 dated the 5th April, 1952 addressed by the Dharmadhikari to the Joshi caste panchayat prescribing the expiation to be performed by the party concerned :

'N. Bhavaji and his family members should bathe 108 times in Tungabhadra river to expiate themselves of the slander pollution (*vakya dosha*) incurred by them. They should do *prayaschitta* according to the *prochana*. Such is the order of the Sri Mata.'

Letter No. 2

On 22-4-1952 the party wrote to the Dharmadhikari as follows :

'As the result of a quarrel, I incurred padaraksha dosha. So I visited the mata with my family and performed prayaschitta as prescribed by your authorities, and we were given the holy Water Blessing. I, therefore, request you to give me a certificate of purification. I have a wife and two daughters.'

Case No. 5

The letter dated the 24th May, 1947 refers to the action taken by the caste members in the caste of one L, a resident of S. L, a Brahman woman, who on the death of her husband, continued money lending business. Money lending is not one of the approved occupations of a Brahman. It was, however, tolerated in the case of a man but held objectionable in the case of a woman.

'My husband was suffering from insanity and paralysis for six years and died two years three months ago. As I had learnt money lending business from him, I carried on his business during his illness and after this death. My caste members are jealous. When my monther-in-law died, the corps could not be

removed until I paid a bribe of Rs. 40. The same thing happened when my husband died. The dead body of my husband could not be removed for three days until I paid Rs. 50. I have arranged for the marriage of my son. They have started the trouble again. They say that the marriage ceremony cannot take place unless I pay a fine of Rs. 100. As I am not guilty of any offence against the caste ethics (*jati-miti*), I am not willing to pay the fine. They are threatening to impose a ban and excommunication on the persons who may extend their help to me. As the date fixed for the marriage is approaching, I pray that you will enquire into the matter and see that my son's marriage is performed on the due date by being present at it. I agree to pay all the expenses that may be incurred by you in that connection.'

The letter from L shows clearly the attitude of her caste members in the case of transposition of occupation by the sexes. She was subjected to repeated punitive measures such as threat of ban, boycott and social ostracism. These seemed to have been wielded as handy weapons by the caste panchayat to extort money. Participation and co-operation of caste members and essential on solemnizations of death and marriage. By withholding participation and co-operation, the group isolated the individual who, thereby, suffers something like a social death. Since the woman could not be directly accused of positive infringement or transgression of caste rules, she could not be penalised under normal circumstances. But when the occasion arose on which she needed the co-operation of the group, the latter penalised her by withholding it.

Case No. 6 is a joint petition from the Brahman *Sishya Varga* (an endogamous sub-sect of Kannada Brahmins) of the villages of N, T and K requesting clarification of their caste status especially in regard to commensality (*sahapanti bhojana*).

Copy of the letter

'The Brahman *Sishya Varga* of the villages N, T, and K dated 25-11-1936. We are in receipt of your notice. Unless our ritual status regarding commensality, etc., is determined, we are not in a position to pay the customary fee to the mata. We shall do so immediately on receiving your decision regarding our ritual status.'

Each caste group regards itself as a homogeneous unit in relation to the other caste groups in the Hindu hierarchy. Each such group is divided into sub-castes, each of which is composed of a number of sub-divisions. These sub-divisions, which may be called the *minimal unit* in a caste, are integrated endogamous units in matters of marital alliances, ritual participation, etc. The status and rank of a sub-caste, is among other things, determined by the commensality accorded to it by the other sub-divisions of the same caste. Therefore, there is always a tendency among the several sections of a sub-caste to acquire the privilege of commonsality with the other sections of the sub-caste which regard themselves as higher. Instances of stray individuals invited by progressive friends of higher sub-sects do not necessarily constitute the upward mobility of a sect. Institutions, such as the Sringeri Mata, are considered to be the authorities competent to sanction this mobility. The letter quoted is one such case in which a sub-sect of the Kannada speaking Brahmans claimed the privilege of commonsality from the mata,

Similar cases on questions involving personal morals, infringement of caste rules referred by individuals including brahmanas, cobblers (*samagara jati*), basket-weavers (*bedara jati*), agricultural labourers, (*areru maharashtra jati*), cultivators (*nayaks*), and others of the Karnataka region to the Sankara mata at Sringeri are furnished below.

VI.1. *Letters from individuals of Karnataka Region to the Sankara mata, Sringeri*

Letter No. 1.

Place—Village C, Shimoga District

Date—9-9-1910

Applicant—TB

Caste—Brahman

‘Wife of M. Bhatta had attained puberty. Without performing the necessary puberty ceremony (*rtu shanti*), she participated in the homa and yagna prescribed by the mata for this offence M. Bhatta’s wife is my younger sister.’

Signed by T B and other members of his caste.

Letter No. 2.

Date—15-11-1944

Applicant—S. Bhatta

Caste—Brahman

Place—Village N, Shimoga District

'My uterine brother V. Bhatta died four years ago. His second wife, P, leaving *kulachara* left her house and lived with a man of *Mundavani jati* (*Sudra*) in K. She had a boy by this alliance. The birth was registered at S, a village of S taluk. On 15-10-1944, my wife died at S Hospital. I went to Gokarna to have the funerary rites performed. But the priests (*purohits*) having heard of my brother's wife refused to perform the rites until the *ghata-sraddha* of P is performed. The latter has three children by her Brahman husband, one of whom is a boy aged seven. The priests are not decided as to who (son or the husband's brother) should perform the *ghata-sraddha*. So I request that the mata may kindly inform me as to who is competent to perform it. (Reply—According to the Dharma-sastras, a *ghata-sraddha* cannot be performed by her son who has not had *upanayana* ceremony. So her husband's brother has to do it. Such is the decision of the mata.)

Subsequently, a letter dated 10-10-1945 addressed to the mata by the priests of Gokarna shows that a *ghata-sraddha* was performed by the son. 'Gokarna kshetra purohit Vedamurthi G. Pandit, S. G. Bhatta and N. R. Bhatta have given the following *suddha patrika* to G. Bhatta, son of V. Bhatta. He having come to Gokarna, has performed the *ghata-sraddha* of his mother P, in accordance with the *vidhi* imposed by us. He has been expiated. He has, therefore, no obstacles to perform his daily oblations.'*

Letter No. 3

Date—1-6-1956

Applicant—K. S. C.

Caste—Brahman

Place—Village B, Shimoga District

'My mother died on Bhadrapada *bahula tritiya* (*adhika masa*). None of the pandits is sure whether the annual ceremony (*sraddha*) is to be performed in the 12th or 13th month. I, therefore, request you to let me know when I should perform it.'

(Reply dated 27-7-1956—The *sraddha* has to be performed on the *bahula tritiya* of the month of Bhadrapada.)

Letter No. 4

Date—14-9-1956

Applicant—R. S. Kulkarni

Caste—Brahman

Place—S. town

*I met the son of the woman concerned at H in October, 1962. He was living as a member of the community without any social disabilities imposed on him by the caste council.

(The matter of observance of pollution by the two families of Pumsavalli R. S. and K. S.)

'The families have been agnates (*gnathis*). Generations have passed, and none of the members know at present of their exact position and degree of relationship. As it is extremely difficult to observe pollution for such distant relatives, it is requested that the Sri Mata, in consultation with the Sastras, will authorize the non-observance of pollution for these two families.'

(Reply No. T. 1357 dated 27-10-1965 was sent to the party. Copy is not available).

Letter No. 5

Place—Village D

Date—30-7-1935

Applicant—K. Prabhu

Caste—Brahman

'My native place is Udipi. I came to D to eke out a living. I was told by the local community that I should not take up agricultural labour with any other caste except Brahmans. It would mean starvation to me. I, therefore, said that if the association (*sangha*) impose such a cruel ban on me, I would have nothing to do with it. There was no reference whatsoever to the Guru Mata. In fact, I have collected the fees (*guru tatha kanikka*) regularly and submitted it.'

Letter No. 6

Date—27-4-1955

Applicant—N. Rao

Caste—Brahman

Place—Village K, Shimoga District

The writer requests the Dharmadhikari of the mata to give a decision on the appropriateness of a marriage alliance between two families of the following gotras and pravars :

<i>Girl's gotra</i>		<i>Boy's gotra</i>	
Bhargava		Bhargava	
Chavana	Pancharisheya	Chavana	Pancharisheya
Aplavana	Jamadagni	Aplavana	Srivatsa
Aurasa	gotra	Aurasa	gotra
Punava		Jamadagni	

A reply (not on record) was sent on 1-5-1955.

Letter No. 7

Date—8-3-1955

Applicant—V. (school master)

Caste—Brahman

Place—Village M, Chikmagalur District

The letter is addressed to the Dharmadhikari of Sringeri Mata. One C of H village, Koppa taluk, came to his house accompanied by a lady N of Mangalore, South Canara, daughter of K. The writer is not sure the relationship between C and N. So he has requested the Dharmadhikari to make enquiries regarding these two as they had come with a marriage proposal. He says he would give his consent on receiving a reply from the latter.

Letter No. 8

Date—9-3-1957

Applicant—S. K. P. Rao

Caste—Brahman

Place—Village A.S., Shimoga District

'Regarding the ban on K Amma and N Amma of S village, I have sent a report earlier. You have written to me that you will write to their purohit separately. It seems that no such letter has reached him. I think that a disturbance will be caused in *samaja dharma* by a delay. If possible, please send a letter to the following address to the effect that misconduct of members is going on. Please send an order to me that I can place a ban on these two women till an expiation penalty is paid by them to the mata.'

Purohit's address is given.

Letter No. 9

Date—19-10-1955

Applicant—M. Giri

Caste—Gosaiji

Place—Village B, Shimoga District

'Mahaswami! M. Saheb, resident of B, had a court caste against me. Out of spite, he reported to our chief (*mukhanda*) S. G. that I took food with him, stayed in his house for three days and, therefore, have lost my caste status. I, therefore, appeal to the mata to enquire of the Chief and impose whatever be the legitimate fine and give me a suddha patrika in the prescribed form. (There is an endorsement on this application by the chief. It reads as follows: Whatever has been mentioned in the above application is correct. There has been a long standing enmity between M. Saheb and M. G.

The slander seems to be out of spite as there is nothing to prove the facts mentioned by the former. Therefore, I request that the fine slander expiation, i.e. (*apavada prayaschitta tanda*) may be levied a suddha patrika issued in his name.)

VI. 2. *Letters from caste councils of Karnataka Region to the Sankara mata, Sringeri*

Letter No. 1

Date—18-12-1941

Applicants—Sri Mata's disciples—The Goldsmith Association, chief and other members

Place—S. town

'As it is not possible always for all the members of the caste panchayat to arrive at a unanimous decision on matters of caste offences, we pray that your Holiness will judge each case on application and prescribe the necessary expiation and purify the individual applicants. For instance, in the case of D's wife C, we are not in a position to take the oath in the sanctuary of Sri Saradamba, as suggested by the Sri Mata, as what we have reported is only on hearsay. Therefore, it is neither right nor just that we swear to the truth of the report. We, therefore, request that whatever step is customary be adopted by the mata in the matter.'

(Signed by the Gauda, Buddhivanta, Yajamana, S. Y. and fourteen others. There is also the signature of one T. S. S. Sastri who was most probably the purohit of the community.)

Letter No. 2

Date—21-7-1938

Applicant—Akkasali Mandali

Place—S. town

'Our casteman, S., son of M. accompanied by the party of G. of Chikmagalur for a marriage. Therefore, the Gauda, Yajmana and other caste members of S. called S. to the temple and made enquiries. He admitted the fault. He was, therefore, fined eight annas and was administered the holy Water Blessing and purified. Since the Gauda, Buddhivanta had contact with S, we request that an enquiry be made into their cases by your Holiness.'

(Thirteen members have signed this letter.)

Letter No. 3

Date—12-6-1939

Applicants—Disciples of Sringeri Mata—The Cobbler caste.

Place—Shimoga District

'In accordance with your orders conveyed by your priest, we agree to obey all the rules and regulations that may be imposed by your holiness. We also declare that we will abide by the custom to pay the preceptor fine and community fine in case of any breach of custom or rule.'

(Signed with the thumb impression of sixteen members—all leaders of the community.)

Letter No. 4

Date—12-6-1939

Applicant—Gauda, Buddhivanta and elders of the community of Areru Samagara jati (a sect of cobblers)

Place—N and S taluks

'Statement of the elders of the community, 'M. son of R, resident of G.K. village, N. taluk, committed a caste offence. His wife and son left him and lived with a man of a different caste. This was confirmed. According to our caste custom (*jati paddati*) before a woman is outcasted, the community members and the Guru Mata have to be paid a fine (called *ottu tanda*) of Rs. 4. When the accused was asked to do so, he did not do it. As he is very poor, we have agreed to take fine of Rs. 2-8-0- and readmit him into our caste. The guilty ones, who have been expelled from our caste, i.e., his wife and son, cannot, however, be expiated or readmitted into our caste. So we have imposed the condition that the said M. shall have no communication with them. We have obtained an oath from him to that effect. This decision has been communicated to our caste men in other villages. Such is our settlement.'

Signed with thumb impressions of ten panchayat members.)

Letter No. 5

Date—30-1-1945

Applicants—The Gauda, Buddhivanta, Yajamana and other members of cobbler caste

Place—same as no. 4

The following is a settlement of agreement (*muchchalika*) and also an application (*binna patrika*) :

- (i) Each caste panchayat shall decide cases pertaining to it by itself.
- (ii) Of the fines collected by way of expiation, one half shall be given to the mata and two-thirds shall be spent on charity (*dharma-karya*).

- (iii) Every purification (*suddhada*) be performed through the priest of the mata and each case reported to the latter.
- (iv) Each council (*katte*) shall pay the honours (*mariyada*) due to the Gauda, Buddhivanta nominated by the mata.
- (v) Each council (*katte*) shall pay the marriage fee (*lagna kanikka*) to the mata.
- (vi) Cases of marriages outside the caste be purified accordingly. Hereafter, we agree to inform the Gauda, Buddhivanta and the priest before any such alliance is contracted.
- (vii) To forgive all the transgressions committed in the past and to endeavour as far as possible in the future to keep to the rules of custom (*dharma*) and conduct (*niti*). We have agreed to the above and are following them strictly.
- (viii) If any member of our caste disobeys any of the above conditions, we agree to abide by the decision of the mata in such cases. This is the agreement that we have placed before *sannidhanam* (presence) of Sri Saradamba.
(Signed with the thumb impression of twenty-five members.)

Letter No. 6

Date—28-1-1945

Place—H. taluk

Statement from the Yajamana, Gauda and Buddhivanta and other members (cobblers).

'K. S. is a member of our caste but had gone out of it. He has prayed that he may be purified and re-admitted into the caste. We have agreed to do so. We also request that the mata will be kind enough to pass orders for the same.'

(Signed with the thumb impressions of thirteen members.)

Letter No. 7

Place—Village C, S taluk

Date—22-6-1938

Caste—Joshi (religious mendicants).

Gauda, Buddhivanta, Yajamana and members of the caste panchayat.

'Swami! we desire to bring the following facts to your notice. Seven members of our caste were involved in a quarrel with S and

exchanged beatings with chappals. They did not go through the expiatory ceremony but secured a purification from the Buddhivanta of A. But we feel that it is not according to rules as the latter is not authorised to do the expiatory rite. We have given a purification to S. in accordance with our caste rules. We have declared the other seven as under social segregation. We, therefore, request you to take up the matter and accord purification to them. Until then they will be under segregation.

Letter No. 8

Date—23-3-1935

Caste—Gauda Sarasvat jati

Place—village T.

'Regarding the puberty ceremony in the house of V, Nayak of P, six houses in K and D villages were placed under a caste ban for not paying the association fee and lamp (*diparadhana*) fee to the mata. Therefore, all our caste members were informed to keep these six households out of every social function. In spite of it, they participated in the puberty ceremony in V. Nayak's house. He did not pay the fee due on such occasions to the mata. N. S. Nayak, I.R. Kamath and A. A. Kamath insulted the sangha and participated with the six households; when questioned, they say that they do not want the sangha nor will they pay any fee and that they will have nothing to do with it. If this is to continue, it will be difficult for us to carry on the work of the sangha. We do not know what to do. What we would like to say is that V. Nayak should be made to pay the function (*prastada*) fees. For breaking the caste rules the six households should be made to pay the association fee (*sangha kanikka*) and the three accomplices the default (*tappu*) fee. Otherwise, it will become difficult for us to collect the lamp fee from the others.

No. 8-A. This letter shows that the Dharmadhikari of Sringeri Mata while camping at village M had summoned the heads of the six households of K and D. In a letter dated 30-7-1935 they say, 'We are in the know of the proceedings which took place in T. We agree to pay the fee and take receipt. We also agree to pay the preceptor fee on all ritual occasions to the Sri Mata.'

No. 8-B. This letter is from one of the three accused as helpers to the six households to resist the authority of the panchayat. He writes, 'I had been to the village P for the meeting. A few others from the villages of A, N, G, I and H had also come. It was decided that a sangha fund should be collected. Some were of

opinion that since they were not members of the sangha there was no need to pay the subscription. There was no talk of boycott (*tiraskara*) of the mata or the caste panchayat. None of the complainants attended the meeting. V. Nayak's wife and my son's wife are sisters. We were not informed of the ban on the households of the villages D and K. The complaint was made out of spite.'

Letter No. 9

Date—17-12-1944

Caste—Basket-weavers (*Bedara jati*)

Place—Village S, Shimoga District

The letter is written by C, son of R, on behalf of his castemen.

'From early times our caste members have been disciples of your State. Chaulikai A had been elected by us to collect the fee to be submitted to your mata. But he has misappropriated the money thus collected for the last two years. So, we request that a Brahman may be appointed by you to collect the subscription. A, instead of looking after the interests of our *samajam*, is creating parties and imposing fines on caste members and collects the money by force which he uses for his personal ends. So we agree to accept and obey whomsoever you may appoint with your authority to collect the fees from our caste members and to safeguard the traditional conduct (*achara vyavahara*) or our *samajam*.'

Letter No. 10

Date—not given

Caste—Serial or Servai (Sudra)

Place—village G, Shimoga district

One V. Servai's daughter, P., was married to N. Servai's son in 1948. Members of the caste participated in the function and the feast. She gave birth to a girl after two years which the members of their caste have declared that she is out of their caste and have banned others from eating in the house of her father, V. Servai. Her father-in-law, N. Servai, has appealed to His Holiness to issue an order to the caste organization the Ramakshatriya Samajam of H taluk to accept him as a caste member.

The ban on V. Servai and his family seems to have been imposed by the caste panchayat for the immoral conduct of his mother. A letter from the caste council to the mata says that the matter had been reported to the sangha at K. They require a certificate of purification from the mata.

(Signed by the president and secretary of the H. Sangha.)

Letter No. 11

Date—9-7-1938

Caste—Aneru Maharashtra *jati* (Sudra landless agricultural labourers.)

Place—village A.K., Shimoga district

The letter is written by the Gauda of the caste panchayat.

'There was a quarrel in which chappals were used. So the culprit was fined Rs 1-4-0 by the Council and was purified. The decision was accepted as final by both the parties concerned and the matter is reported to the Dharmadhikari of Sringeri Mata.'

Letter No. 12

Date—14-9-1938

Caste—same as no. 11

Place—G.K. Grama, Shimoga district

B, the elder sister of S, being a widow conceived. Hence, the family was placed under a ban. She has been excommunicated from the caste. The said S being a poor man implored that the ban placed on him be removed. Therefore, our caste panchayat ordered a fine of Rs 1-4-0 to be paid to the mata as preceptor fee and the performance of panchagavya homa and *prokshana*. He has undergone these acts of expiation and has been readmitted into the caste.

Letter No. 13

Date—24-7-1954

A petition from the Vaisya Mandali of Gokarna requesting the mata to renovate the Sankara Mata at the place and appoint an agent (mata Mudradhikari) to collect the fee.

Letter No. 14

Date—15-3-1955

The public of Gokarna consisting of members of different castes have sent an appeal to the mata to appoint an agent and make necessary arrangement to collect the fee.

Remarks

The above details furnish an idea as to the nature and extent of control exercised by the Sringeri Mata as an authoritative guide in the matter of socio-religious behaviour even for castes which are considered normally to be outside the pale of the four Varnas, namely, cobblers, basket-weavers, etc.

Many of the references are from the lower castes who seem anxious to maintain their solidarity and caste scruples. Even among the Brahmans, caste panchayats seem to be functioning in some of the remote villages and among particular sects. A closer study of the caste groups and their caste organizations in districts lying in close proximity to this ancient seat of Vedic learning may reveal to some extent their affiliation and dependance on this religious institution. It can be said, however, that the Sringeri Mata in an advisory capacity and with the authority of an accredited upholder of Hindu Dharma serves to maintain the moral integrity of the tiny caste groups and thus help them to preserve their social unity. It is a noteworthy feature of this institution that it extends its advice and service to any Hindu community which seeks its help irrespective of the latter's rank in the caste hierarchy.

VI. 3. Miscellaneous Letters received by Sankara Mata (Sringeri from different parts of South India).

Letter No. 1

Date—4-12-1959

Place—Irinjalakuda (Kerala)

May it please your Holiness,

My humble namaskarams. Perhaps you might remember me. I was in Malaya, and I have now settled here. I had been to Coimbatore to see your Holiness there.

Now, I have three problems, and I request that your Holiness will please let me know the solution for them.

Can one sub-sect, such as Vathima, Vadama, Brahat-charanam and Astasahasram, intermarry in o'her's sub-sect? Is there any religious objection to it? I have two daughters born on the same day. Can these two daughters be married to twin brothers? Is there any necessity for looking into their horoscopes as both the boys and girls are twins?

Being both twin daughters, can they be married on the same day to different boys of different families?

Namaskarams from my wife, children and myself.

Letter No. 2

Date—22-2-1960

Place—Kanniyar (Coimbatore district)

To His Holiness Sri Sringeri Jagadguru Sannidhanam. Multitudinous namaskarams to your holy feet.

Can wife's brother perform the obsequies for a person- The deceased's wife is also dead. They are gnathis.

On the twelfth day when the *pindas* of ancestors (in the male line) of three ascending generations are mixed together is it permissible for a member of another *gotram* than that of the deceased to do it?

For what period of time a man, when he has received a *godana*, is prohibited from participating in a *sraddha*?

Can wife be a *sumangili* in a *sraddha*?

Reply

If the deceased had willed that his wife's brother should perform his obsequies and inherit the property, the latter is also entitled to perform the rites.

2 He can also do the *sapindakarana*.

3 There is no relation between receiving of *godana* and participation in a *sraddha*.

4 The fourth query is not clear.

Letter No. 3

Date—25-2-1960

Place—Kurnool (Andhra Pradesh)

To His Holiness Srimad Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya Swamivaru, Camp Hampi.

Respected Swamiji,

My pranam to your Holiness. I wanted to have your sacred opinion when you were camping at Urvakonda but due to shortage of time could not fulfil my wish.

I hope you will pardon me for addressing you by post, but I am anxious to obtain your esteemed advice regarding a particular matter involving subtlety of Dharma.

I am a Brahmin by birth but I married a lady, also Brahmin by birth, but who unfortunately lost her parents in infancy and was brought up by caste Hindu non-Brahmans. She was brought up like a Brahmin girl only in her food and other habits. So I did not see any objection for marriage with her. Due to this marriage, some troubles and ailments have occurred in my family, but after long discussion it has been agreed by my parents and relatives that if the

learned opinion of religious elders approve of it, they have no objection to accept my wife into our family fold.

Therefore, I appeal to your Holiness as the ultimate authority in Hindu religion to clear my doubts and kindly grant me your invaluable advice and guidance. I would like to state in this connection that my wife is very virtuous and religious and follows all the tenets of our religion and its dharmic principles and is most faithful and obedient to me.

I would like to know whether parting with such a lady who adopts all the Brahmanic ways of life better than most other Brahmins is good and reasonable. I would also request you to kindly enlighten me whether in the modern conditions we can make minor adjustments in our custom without sacrificing the basic principles.

I am sure that your sacred opinion will restore peace and amity in our family and be a guiding star in my future life.

(This letter is written in English)

Letter No. 4

Date—24-4-1960

Place—Malmangalam (Madura district)

Much as I envy your position of being closely associated in the presence of His Holiness, I take consolation that I am your close associate though not bodily but mentally, and so I can take pride in that whenever I need any advice from His Holiness, I can have it through you.

My mother is still in the same disabled condition, and I am attending to her wants to the best of my ability. Please, convey this information to His Holiness, and I am always praying for God's continued benevolence on our family through such saintly person's intercession on our behalf.

Moreover, as I would like to visit His Holiness during these days, I am being kept back here to attend on my ailing mother in a sacred duty. I must not be found wanting in faithfulness.

My youngest nephew is yet to get married, and it seems improbable to have it fixed in Chitra itself. According to the Tamil almanacs we observe, it is said that there is *sukra asthamana* during *Vaikasi* 9th to *Adi* 7th, and as such there is ordinarily a prohibition against holding of *subha karmam* during this period.

A close relation of mine and also a good astrologer with orthodox views states that *rishaba* being the house of *sukra* and *mithawa*

being the house of Mercury, and consequently friend's house of sukra, good functions can be performed.

I would, therefore, request you to enquire His Holiness's views in this matter and let me know at your earliest convenience.

With my humble pranams to His Holiness and respects to you all."

Reply

Place—Camp, Hyderabad

Date—1-5-1960

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your kind letter dated 24-4-1960. I am sorry that your mother is still in the same state of health.

I conveyed your namaskarams and contents of your letter to His Holiness. Regarding the marriage of your youngest daughter, I am directed to inform you that marriage or any other *subha karma* ought not to be performed when there is *sukra asthamana* or *guru asthamana*.

Letter No. 5

Date—2-6-1960

Place—Bangalore

To Shri Shri The Jagadguru of Sringeri Mutt, Shri Sarada Peeth, Sringeri.

'Most Respected Holiness,

I beg to write to your Holiness to clarify some doubts of mine about a matrimonial alliance which has cropped up in my family.

I have a sister. She has a daughter. I have a cousin (my father's elder brother's daughter). She has got a son. Both the husbands of my sisters are not at all relatives except being the husbands. The *gotrams* and *pravaras* of both the families are different. Under the above circumstances can there be any matrimonial alliance between my sister's daughter and my cousin's son? I would be most humbly grateful if your most respectful Holiness clarifies the point at your earliest convenience.'

Reply

Date 14-6-1960

Place—Kovvuru (Andhra Pradesh)

'Dear Sir,

Your letter dated 2-6-60 addressed to Sringeri reached us there days ago in our camp. Its contents were submitted to His Holiness

with your namaskaram. You have asked in your letter whether your sister's daughter can be given in marriage to your cousin's (your father's elder brother's daughter's) son. In reply, I am directed to inform you that as the girl and the boy are sister and brother, their marriage is not allowed by Sastras.'

Letter No. 6

Date—19-7-1960

Place—Tennore (Tiruchirapalli district)

'Dear Sir,

I enclosed herein the correspondence relating to the fixation of the date of *yajur upakarmam*. It is said that there is conflict between the previous decision and the present one. The matter may be gone into again and the decision may be published in the papers so that it may be known to all. The matter is urgent.'

Reply

Date—25-7-1960

Place—Camp, Madras

'Dear Sir,

Your letter dated 19-7-60 regarding *upakarmam*. The question has been examined thoroughly and the notes and the conclusion are written by Sri Kasi Ganapadigal in Tamil and in Sanskrit are enclosed.'

Letter No. 7

Date—27-7-1960

Place—Karaikkurichchi (Tirunelveli district)

'Dear Sir,

Pranams. There is a controversy this year in our village regarding the date for performing *yajur upakarmam*. We are the followers of Vaidyanatha Sampradayam. There are two views regarding the *upakarmam*. One view is that the *upakarmam* should be performed on Saturday, 6-8-1960, and the other is that the same is to be performed on Sunday, 7-8-1960.

We are in a dilemma as to which side we have to take up. We have, therefore, to approach the Maha Sannidhanam for enlightenment. Kindly guide us on the matter and favour us with the esteemed view of the Maha Sannidhanam at your earliest opportunity. Hoping to be excused for the trouble we have to give you in the midst of your heavy and multifarious engagements.

With humble homage and obeisance to the Maha Sannidhanam.'

Reply not available.

Letter No. 8

Date—1-8-1960

Place—Coimbatore

'I have been ill in bed for the past one year. I am not able to perform even *sandhya* owing to my physical condition. I have been repeating the *Gayatri mantra* during the period. I am told that it is not proper to do *Gayatri japam* without performing *sandhyavandanam*. Kindly enlighten me on the point by referring the matter to the pandits there. If it is not improper, I would request you to place the matter before His Holiness and let me have the benefit of His advice. I request you to send a reply to this letter as early as possible. Of all japas I am naturally more inclined to *Gayatri* than to any other japam. Excuse me for the trouble. I am addressing you this letter so that you may decide whether to approach His Holiness on this small matter.'

Reply

Date—3-8-1960

Place—Camp, Madras

'Dear Sir,

The contents of your post card, dated 1-8-1960, were submitted to His Holiness with your namaskarams.

I am directed to write to you as follows :

Even if it is not possible to perform *sandhyavandanam* owing to physical condition it can be done by *manasikam* and as many number of *Gayatri japam* may be performed according to your ability.

His Holiness *asirmantrakshata* and *Sri Sarada Chandra Mouliswara prasadam* are herewith sent.'

Letter No. 9

Place—Vijayanagaram (Andhra Pradesh)

Date—29-8-1960

To His Holiness the Peetadhipathi, Sringeri Mutt, Sringeri, Mysore State.

'May it please your Holiness,

The undersigned most loyally and respectfully begs to be enlightened by your Holiness on the below mentioned points :

(i) Can a Vaidic Brahman of an orthodox type entertain a Mahayana Buddhist as a guest ?

(ii) Is interdining in such a case allowable? How is it to be viewed under the present world conditions?’

Reply

Date—9-9-60

Place—Camp, Madras

‘Dear Sir,

The contents of your letter dated 29-8-60 were submitted to His Holiness with your namaskarams.

In reply, I am directed to inform you that there is no objection to entertain a Mahayana Buddhist or, as a matter of fact, any person as a guest; but interdining with such persons is not permissible according to Sastras.’

Letter No. 10

Date—5-9-60

Place New Delhi

Dear Sir.

Kindly convey our anantakoti sastanga namaskarams to our Holiness and kind enquiries. I have today sent by m.o. Rs. 100—my humble contribution to the *aradhana* and *puja* of our late Mahaswamigal, *biksha* for our present *Sannidhanam* and *puja* for Sri Saradambal, etc. I could not do anything so far due to my ill health, mental worries, etc. Kindly arrange to send the prasadam.

2. Also please write to me the gotram of our late Mahaswamigal immediately for offering *tarpanams* to him.

3. Please place the following facts before our Holiness and get his advice on the same.

(a) The *Sri-Chakram* presented by our Holiness was on a Saturday on the Holi *Poornima* day. The electric light went off at that time. He wanted to give all the same. The usual oil light was brought then and I was given the *chakra*.

(b) A stone punctured my left foot at the same time of my visit to Sringeri. Still it has not healed up after ten or twelve operations and cuttings. Even yesterday, the doctor cut it again. This has practically caused me lame, and I cannot use leather shoes nor can I walk bare-footed anywhere. It is giving me a lot of trouble.

(c) Ever since I got the *chakra*, I could not do any *puja* with concentration and mental peace. Sickness or mental worry always troubles me. I got the *chakram* in March/April, 1953.

(d) My daughter died in June, 1953, a few months after I got the chakra. Holiness might remember the same.

(e) Consultations with *Nadigranthas* show that I have done some *apacharam*. Hence, I am suffering.

(f) I request that following doubts be cleared :

- (i) If I am not fit to do Chakra puja, should I stop the same? Some are of opinion that the Chakra puja should not be done in a house but only in temples.
- (ii) I am anxious to do more elaborate pujas, like Navarathna. But no health.
- (iii) I even got a talisman from Sakatapuram Sankaracharya when he was here last, and he prescribed some medicines for the foot. No effect so far.
- (iv) All above induced me to take *chandi* also. I am also doing the same with great enthusiasm. No health.
- (v) If a man has to suffer *prarabhdha* at any cost then what good is there in being religious and godfearing?
- (vi) If Sri Vidya, the highest mantra, cannot cure or prevent such evils then what is the use of having such mantras.

I am in great troubles. I want good explanation to clear the same. Otherwise I am afraid that I shall be frustrated.

Reply

Date—19-9-1960

Place—Camp, Madras

‘Dear Sir,

Your letter dated 5-9-60 addressed to Kalady was received back from there only on Saturday. The contents were submitted in detail to His Holiness with your *namaskarams*.

Your m.o. for Rs. 100 was received before your letter was received, and prasadam was sent to you also. I hope you have received the prasadam already.

I sent a telegram to you today informing late Mahasannidhanam's gotram as Gargya. I hope, you have received this also in time.

With regard to the other points mentioned in your letter, I am directed by His Holiness to inform you as follows :

Since you have said that you have not been able to do any puja to Srichakram with concentration and mental peace, His Holiness advises that the Srichakram may be given to any place or person

where you are sure that the puja will be done properly. It is enough if you do japams and continue to do chandi also. His Holiness has further directed me to inform you that no doubt the prarabhda has to be suffered by every one. But puja and japam have to be done to minimise its gravity. His Holiness is sure that you will never become frustrated nor do you lose faith and belief in God.

His Holiness conveys his blessings to you that you may regain your health very early and have peace of mind.

His Holiness asirmantrakshta and Sri Saradamba *Chandramouliswara* prasadam are herewith sent'.

Letter No. 11

Date—24-9-1960

Place—Varanasi

'Narayana Smaranam. Your kind letter of the 14th instant and the enclosure were handed to us when I returned to the place on the 19th instant for the aradhana. Thanks very much. The aradhana was duly performed in the local Sringeri Mata. We in the Poornanand Mutt also celebrated it in a very humble way by arranging a small function.

I am enclosing a letter I have received from the Secretary, Lucknow. They have been granted a plot of land in a park by the Corporation and have installed a statue of Goswami Tulsi Das and are now proposing to erect there a small compact building which will serve as a staying place for visiting mahatmas and also as a platform on special occasions. There is an old Hanuman Mandir in front. The *murthi* (statue) of Hanumanji is facing north. Nobody knows definitely whether the *murthi* has been consecrated by regular *pratishta*. The Sammelan people wish to remodel the temple, renovate it, the *murthi* facing east. Thereby the image would face the statue of Tulsi Das and they can make good use of the open space in the part on special occasions by putting up a pandal and use the temple varandah as a platform. There seems to be some difference of opinion among the local people. Some say that the *murthi* should not be disturbed. Others feel that it can be done. They have requested me for a decision. I have promised them to refer the matter to you and get a decision from the Jagadguru Maharaj in which they all agreed they had full faith.'

Kindly let me know if a way in conforming with the sastras can be found to make the alternations in the temple. Please, place the

matter before His Holiness the Jagadguruji and communicate his advice direct to the following address.'

Reply

Date—1-10-1960

Place—Camp, Madras

'Dear Sir,

His Holiness has written a letter dated the 24th September, 1960, seeking instructions whether the murthi of Hanumanji, which is now facing north in an old Hanuman Mandir, could be made to face east. I submitted the fact, to His Holiness who is pleased to direct me to inform you that the murthi could be made to face east and installed according to sastras.'

Letter No. 12

Date—19-9-1960

Place—Mysore

'Respected Sir,

I most respectfully sheweth that I am a Hindu belonging to *Bhavasara Kshatriya* community which owes its allegiance to your Holy Mutt in all religious and social matters. I have a daughter to be married, and I intend offering her to my wife's late sister's husband who is a good match in all respects. The local pandits of *Dharma-sastras* are of the opinion that the marriage between parties related as in the present case is not prohibited by the sastras. Since your valued opinion on this matter will have a decisive force in this matter, I humbly request your goodself to let me know at your earliest convenience, after such consultations as may be quite necessary, whether the contemplated marriage is in order or prohibited by the sastras. I shall be grateful to your esteemed opinion.'

Reply

Date—1-10-1960

Place—Camp, Madras

'Dear Sir,

With reference to your letter dated 19-9-1960 addressed to Sringeri and received in our camp three days ago enquiring whether a marriage between a person and his late wife's sister's daughter could

be performed, I am directed to inform you that such marriages are not allowed by the sastras'.

Letter No. 13

Date—11-10-1960

Place—Cochin (Kerala State)

'May it please Your Holiness,

I regret my mother expired on 16-9-60 at about 4.30 p.m., I.S.T. Friday, *krishna ekadasi tithi*.

Some opine that the death should be deemed to have taken place in the month of *Simham* as the *Kanni-Ravi sankramanam* occurred only at about 5.30 p.m. according to old *panchangam*, i.e., after the death on that date while others say that the day, and therefore the month, of death should be reckoned as *Kanni* only. The difference of opinion appears to be due to the different methods of calculation adopted in calendars (*Vakya* and *Drik ganita*). I, therefore, humbly request your Holiness to be pleased to give a ruling *Simham* or *Kanni*.

I seek a very early reply as the recurring monthly ceremonies have to be performed on the due date.'

Reply

Date—14-11-1960

Place—Camp, Madras

'Your letter dated 11-10-60 was received and submitted to His Holiness with your namaskarams.

I am instructed by His Holiness to inform you that you should follow the *panchangam* which you have been usually following for all purposes. If in that *panchangam* the *sankramanam* is after your mother's death, you should do in the previous month, i.e., in *Simham*, and if the *sankramanam* is before your mother's death, you should do it in the next month, i.e., *Kanni*'.

Letter No. 14

Date—11-10-60

Place—Rajapalaiyam (Madras State)

'Dear Sir,

I belong to the Bharadwaja gotram and find that many good alliances for marriages of my daughters have to be given up due to sagotram.

I remember, there was a big discussion on sagotra marriages by the Vedic scholars. I shall be grateful to you to let me know at the

earliest, the decision and *Srimukham* of His Holiness the Jagadguru in this matter.

My devoted pranams at the feet of the Jagadguru.'

Reply

Date—17-10-60

Place—Camp, Madras

'Dear Sir,

Your letter dated 11-10-1960 was received, and the contents were submitted to His Holiness with your namaskarams.

In reply, I am directed to inform you that there is no sanction for sagotra marriages in the Sastras.'

Letter No. 15

Date—1-12-60

Place—Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh)

'Most respected Sir,

With humble regards I submit at the Lotus feet of your Holiness the following for opinion and most sacred guidance.

While Your Holiness was at Hyderabad, I was honoured by becoming a disciple of yours. Since then befitting my circumstances and difficulties, I have been following your instructions regularly. I do agree that I am not performing the same to my satisfaction as there are so many other factors which go against us. I dreamt on 7-11-60 which is as follows :

Your Holiness was staying in a temple of which I have a vague idea. You sent to my house one of your disciples with the orders for me to present myself within three minutes if at all I want the prasadam and blessings from your Holiness as you were to proceed for the next camp. As I could not walk fast in the dream I was rather late to be present at your Holi feet. By the time I reached the main entrance of the temple, Your Holiness was descending the steps of the main gate. On seeing me there in the mob present to take your *darshan*, you in rage asked me the cause for my being late and as a punishment refused to bestow me with the *prasadam* and *asirvada*. A gentleman from the mob, most probably a pleader by profession, pleaded on my behalf and begged at your feet to forgive me my mistake. Whereupon Your Holiness addressing me in rage asked me whether I have brought with me a *sreenphal* (coconut) and Rs 20. I was present at your Lotus Feet in my homely dress, and, naturally, at that time I was penniless. The same gentleman who had previously pleaded on my behalf came forward and lent me the

amount. Your Holiness asked me to pay the same to some of your office-bearers and to receive the *prasadam*. After your departure, I was supposed to look after a reception in your Honour. As I was busy in it, the gentleman concerned came to me, and I returned him the amount he had advanced. Before the next function could start I awoke and found myself in bed.

I am remitting the amount of Rs. 20 as per my dream and earnestly hope to receive your blessings and guidance in future. Also, please, be kind enough to explain to me the meaning of the dream as it is beyond the capacity of a humble creature like me.

P.S. On Wednesday, the 30th November, 1960, I dreamt another dream in which a cousin of mine from Poona handing me a parcel from your Holiness containing three pieces of cloth, one white silk, one red silk and one violet shawl. Being overjoyed, I wanted to show them to my mother who was sitting in our Puja room with three other ladies, one of which was my eldest sister-in-law. By the time I removed the articles from the packing I awoke. What does all this indicate? Please be kind enough to explain to me the meaning and guide me in future. No words to thank you.'

Reply

Date—5-12-1960

Place—Madras

'Sir,

I am in receipt of your letter dated 1-12-60 together with the copy of your previous letter, I submitted their contents to His Holiness with your namaskarams.

His Holiness has directed me to advise you regularly to go to Sri Sankara Mata every Monday, have darshan of Sri Sankara and offer coconuts and obtain *prasadam*. His Holiness further desires me to inform you that you need not be thinking about dreams you had. His Holiness conveys his blessings to you and to all other members of your family for long life and happiness. *Asirmantrak-shatam* given by His Holiness with his blessings and Sri Chandra-mouliswara *prasadam* are herewith sent.'

Letter No. 16

Date—6-2-61

Place—Kolar Gold Fields (Mysore)

'May it please His Holiness to permit me, the president of the Brahmana *Samootham*, to approach the *asthanam* on behalf of the said *samootham* for opinion and guidance in a peculiar situation

which has arisen in connection with *Rathothsavam* during the annual *Brahmothsavam* of the local temple this year which falls on *Phalgun poornima* day, i.e., 2-3-1961.

It is the usual practice to have Brahmana *santharpana* followed by poor feeding by the Brahmana *samooham* on the *Rathothsavam* day. Though there is a *chandragrahanam* (lunar eclipse) in the evening of that day, the temple authorities have not postponed *Rathothsavam* falling on the *grahanam* (eclipse) day as it has been done in some other places (as we learn). But *Rathothsavam* is arranged to start by 10.30 a.m. and to complete by and within 4.30 p.m. so as to finish it off before the actual eclipse period.

The question is whether we Brahmana *Samooham* Executive Committee are to have the *santharpana* and poor feeding on that day. We have no mind to stop the *santharpana* which has been conducted as a sacred religious duty for the last twenty-three years without a break. Hence, our Executive Committee has unanimously resolved to approach proper authorities for authoritative opinion for guidance, namely, all the three *Matathipathis* on the following questions from the *samooham's* standpoint as persons conducting the *santharpana* though some persons not being strictly orthodox may not have objections for dining five or six hours earlier to the commencement of the eclipse: (1) Can we have any feeding function at all that day? If permitted to have, within what time that function as a *sastraic* *santharpana* is to be finished? (2) Can we postpone feeding function alone though *Rathothsavam* might take place as per programme which is also to be carried on by this *samooham* as *ubayadars*? (3) Can the *santharpana* be had on some other day after the *Rathothsavam* as a part of its religious function or are to omit the feeding function altogether this year?

The matter be kindly treated as very urgent, and an immediate reply is solicited as there is hardly sufficient time to finalise our programme which could be done only after an authoritative reply is received.

With great reverence and respect to the *peetham* and praying for gracious guidance and blessings.

Reply

Place—Camp, Madras

Date—9-2-1961

‘Dear Sir,

Your *Vignapana Patrika* dated 6-2-61 requesting to inform you as to when Brahmana *santharpana* has to be conducted, as on the

Rathotsavam day there is chandragrahanam, was submitted to His Holiness with your namaskarams. In reply, I am directed to inform you that Brahmana santharpana may be done on the next day.

Letter No. 17

Date—22-2-61

Place—Masulipatam (Andhra Pradesh)

‘Your letter of 22-1-61 noting the tour programme of His Holiness till 10-2-61 to hand. Please, let me know the future programme of His Holiness. May I expect His Holiness at this place in March or April to preside over the anniversary of our Sampallada Patasala ?

A brahmachari boy, aged about seventeen years, is performing *devatharchana* in a gentleman’s house for the last three or four years. He is living in that way. His father died a few days back. He has two married elder brothers. All the three brothers performed the funeral of the father. Now, a doubt has arisen whether this bachelor boy can continue the performance of the *devatharchana* in that house or is disqualified by the yearly pollution. Till the year passes, some say that such people are disqualified while some others say that such a rule does not apply to bachelors. Please, refer this matter to His Holiness and let me have a reply.’

Reply

Date—1-3-1961

Place—Camp, Madras

Revered Swamiji,

Namaskaram. I have conveyed your namaskaram and the contents of your postcard dated 22-2-61 to His Holiness.

His Holiness is leaving Madras for Ambattur for a stay of three days. He will then begin the tour in Andhra Pradesh. You may expect him in one or one and half month at your place. Regarding the brahmachari whose father died some days back, I am directed to inform you that the brahmachari can perform *devatharchana* in another gentleman’s house.’

Letter No. 18*

Date—7-3-1961

Place—Madras

‘His Holiness Sri Sringeri Jagadguru Sankaracharya of Sree Sarada Peetam.

*The writer is a Christian.

Most Holy Swamigal,

I pen these following lines for your kind consideration and favourable blessings for success in my attempts.

I am struggling since August, 1960, to get into the Territorial Army in the rank of a Lieutenant. I have been defeated in my attempts on account of one person who broke my room and found the communications from the authorities and made me fail in my first interview.

I belong to the Anglican Church but a follower of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Seven months went in vain. Your prayers are needed that I may get some job.

Your intercessions are vary vitally needed for the Almighty to enlighten me and to better my circumstances. I find life very hard. I has feel highly thankful if His Holiness intercedes for me before the throne of grace and grant me the occupation in the Territorial Army in twentyeight days time. I promise to do my best to the land of my birth if I get the occupation in the Land Forces from the Headquarters.'

Reply

Date—16-3-61

Place—Camp Nellore, Andhra Pradesh.

'Dear Sir,

I submitted the contents of your letter dated 7-3-61 (received in our camp yesterday) to His Holiness. I am directed to inform you that His Holiness would pray before Lord Chandramouliswara to fulfil your desire to get an appointment early.'

Letter No. 19

Place—Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh)

Date—3-3-1961

'Revered Sir,

I wish to place before you the obvious urgent need for setting up an All-India Institution to counteract the growing evil influences of the cinema shows which are day by day telling upon the morale of the people both young and old.

In all towns and cities, cinema goers stand in a queue for hours together at the booking windows of the houses simply for claiming

priority in purchasing cinema tickets. No amount of propaganda about the evils that this habit is inculcating could stop the mania.

The only hope to check this crazy mentality is to provide an alternative recreation equally interesting but without the baneful effect of cinema shows.

This could be in the form of Harikatha, Puranam spiritual lectures on *lhakti*, *vairagya* and *gnana-adhana* in *asanas*, *pranayama*, *dhyana* and *upasana*, *gnana-nista*, *nada-upasana* and *samadhi*. The performances should be by the best talented men living.

These should be made available to all classes of people free of charge, the required funds being met from donations from religious and charitable people all over India. Grants from Central and State Governments also may be obtained, if possible.

In the first instance, its activities may be confined to big cities and gradually extended to towns. An All-India Institution has to be established with the President of Indian Republic as its ex-officio president and the Governors of all provinces as ex-officio secretaries. The value of such a pious and beneficial institution in such a time as this cannot be over stressed.

The good folk all over the country will naturally attracted and can be co-opted as members according to the wishes of the managing body. I beg to approach your goodself so that I may be told whether a move to such an All-India Institution would receive encouragement at your gracious hands.'

Reply

Date—16-3-1961

Place—Camp Nellore

'Dear Sir,

I submitted the contents of your letter dated 3-3-1961 to his Holiness with your namaskarams.

His Holiness is pleased with your idea to divert the people from visiting cinema, to attend some other activity which will elevate them morally and spiritually. His Holiness agrees that this is an urgent need requiring the support of all the well-wishers of the country and goes to a great extent to raise the moral and spiritual standard of the country as a whole.'

Letter No. 20

Date—11-3-1961

Place—Hosur (Madras State)

‘Dear Sir,

I am submitting a very small matter for favour of your opinion.

‘I have a friend of mine a *golla* by caste. He belongs to the Palu gotram. Another person of the same community of Palu gotram desires to give his daughter to my friend. Are Gollas a Sudra caste of the same gotram, like Palu gotram, entitled to enter into marriage relations? Can a Hosur *golla* accept the daughter of a Bangalore *golla*? Vaidikis of Hosur have directed my friend to get opinion from the Sringeri Mata through me by correspondence. Hence this letter, I am placing this small matter so that you may obtain the opinion of the Dharmadhikari of your mata and transmit the same at your earliest convenience.’

Reply

Date—Nil

Place—Camp Ongole (Andhra Pradesh)

‘Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your letter dated 11-3-1961. Its contents were submitted to His Holiness with your namaskarams. I am directed to inform you that marriages of the kind mentioned in your letter have to be done according to desacharam.’

Letter No. 21

Date—21-4-1961

Place—Madras

‘Dear Sir,

Coming to the wordly life through which I am passing at present, we in our family wish to go to Rameswaram and this is pending for a long time to perform the thila homa for my deceased mother, who passed away sometime in 1932. Now I wish to seek the blessings of His Holiness and proceed further during June, but I have been told by some purohiths here that two new moons come in the month of Vaikasi, and this is not very auspicious as this month is called *mala masam*. Some say that I need not see this for *pithur* karma. However, my guide is only our Loka Guru His Holiness, and under His directions I will decide to plan my programme. Please, therefore, convey this to His Holiness and let me have a line in reply at your earliest convenience for which act of kindness I will be grateful to you forever.’

Reply

Date—28-4-1961

Place—Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh)

‘Dear Sir,

I submitted the contents of your letter dated 21-4-1961 to His Holiness with your namaskarams. You have sought instructions whether thila homa may be performed in the month of Vaikasimala masam). I am instructed to inform you that it ought not be done in mala masam.’

Letter No. 22*

Date—26-7-1961

Place—Bangalore

‘Your Holiness,

I wish to extend to your Holiness my most respectful, warmest felicitations on the auspicious occasion of Your Holiness’ visit to Bangalore subsequent to Your Holiness ascension to the *Gadhi*.

I would mention for your Holiness’ information that I embraced Hinduism under the *navi* of Shiva at Sri Eswara temple on 10-1-1961, viz., on the date of commencement of the Shivaratri festival.

I most earnestly and respectfully request Your Holiness, blessings and prayers.’

Reply

Date—30-7-1961

Place—Camp Bangalore

‘Dear Sir,

I submitted the contents of your letter dated July 26 to His Holiness.

His Holiness was glad to know about the love and respect you have shown towards Hinduism.

His Holiness is pleased to convey his blessings to you.’

Letter No. 23

Date—1-8-1961

Place—Erode (Madras State)

‘Dear Sir,

Reached here safely. Please, let me know the date of the *Sravanam* for the Telugu Brahmins and Tamil Brahmins. I have already asked about this to—. I have forgotten to approach him and get information about this. So I request you to inform me the actual date of the *savanam* with authority.’

*The writer is a non-Indian Christian.

Reply

Date—3-8-1961

‘Dear Sir,

Your post card dated 1-8-1961 regarding date on which upakaram has to be performed. According to Sri Mata panchanga, those who act according to Vaidhyanthiyam have to perform it on Friday, the 25th instant, and those who act according to *Dharma-Sindhu* and *Nirnaya Sindhu* have to perform it on Saturday, the 25th instant.’

Letter No. 24

Date—1-8-1961

Place—Kerala State

‘Dear Sir,

For submission to his Holiness. My son will be back from Germany in the last week of this month.

A week before he left for Germany he wrote to me to have his and his wife's horoscopes examined. I did the same.

(1) The astrologer's finding in that both he and his wife have a very bad period of nearly ten months. To add to this, the astrologer awards me also a bad period for nearly the same period.

(2) My last son has been unwell for more than a year, and the best English physician in Bombay having failed to give him relief, he is now having Ayurvedic treatment. He is also awarded a bad period by the astrologer.

(3) Palliative rites recommended by the astrologer for the family as well as for the individuals are :

- (i) Bhagavat seva and Ganapati homa and *saptaha* recitation of Srimad Bhagavatam;
- (ii) Subrahmanya and Devi *bhajanam* and Rama *namam* and
- (iii) Satyanarayana puja.

On the whole, I am passing through very anxious times. The palliative rites have not yet been performed. I am going through my devotional exercises.’

Reply

Date—4-8-1961

Place—Bangalore

‘Dear Sir,

I submitted your namaskarams and the contents of your letter dated 1-8-1961 to His Holiness. His Holiness was sorry to know

that a bad period has been predicted by an astrologer to your family. His Holiness conveys His blessings that all the members of your family may come out of this period safely. Asirmantrakshatam and Sri Sarada Chandramouliswara prasadam are sent herewith.'

Letter No. 25

Date—4-8-1961

Place—Coimbatore (Madras State)

'Dear Sir,

Received your letter long with prasadam of Vyas puja. Thank you very much for the same. By the grace of God we are all well here.

In last January, my second daughter's marriage had taken place and it went off well.

When Sri Sannidhanam was here, he asked me to do Surya namaskaram. As per his instruction, I have started this puja for the last few weeks. On every Sunday the priest comes and does these namaskar. I would like to know for how many weeks I should do the puja. Please be kind enough to ascertain from Sannidhanam and let me know.'

Reply

Date—7-8-1961

Place—Bangalore

'Madam,

I have conveyed the contents of your letter dated 24th instant to His Holiness with your namaskarams.

In reply, I am directed to inform you that you should do Surya namaskaram for a period of one mandalam, i.e., forty-eight days.'

Letter No. 26

Date—7-8-1961

Place—Coimbatore (Madras State)

'Dear Sir,

Ever since I returned from Bangalore, I find someone or other is laid up here. My daughter, who had an attack of diphtheria, is very weak and from yesterday she is having temperature. She has been telling me to write to His Holiness and get prasadam so that she can recover from her illness. I am also laid up with fever for the last two days. My daughter's *nakshatram* is *Puram*. Please inform the child's request to His Holiness and get her His blessings and Sarada Chandramouli prasadam. My brother's wife is also not well.

Regarding *Varamahalakshmi vratam* and *sravanam* I wanted His Holiness' opinion over the same. The *sishtyas* here wanted me to write to His Holiness and so last week I had addressed a letter to His Holiness in Sanskrit. Kindly give us the dates of *sravanam* and *Varalakshmi vratam*.'

Reply

Date—10-8-1961

Place—Camp Bangalore

'I am in receipt of your letter dated 7th instant. I brought to the notice of His Holiness that your daughter is ill and that she prays for *prasadam* and blessings. His Holiness was very much pleased for the staunch devotion and faith of the child and is pleased to convey His blessings for the speedy recovery to her normal health.

Asirmantrakshatam and *Sri Sarada Chandramouliswara prasadam* are herewith sent.

Varamahalakshmi vratam has to be performed on 25-8-1961. *Upakarmam* for those who follow *Vaidhyathaniam* is on 25-8-1961 and for those that follow *Nirnaya-Sindhu* and *Dharma Sindhu* is on 26-8-1961 according to our *mata panchangam*.'

Letter No. 27

Date—10-8-1961

Sir,

With reference to your letter dated 7-8-1961 regarding the date on which *Sri Varamahalakshmi vratam* has to be performed, I have given below the date and also dates on which *upakarmam* has to be performed. According to our *panchangam* *Varamahalakshmi vratam* is on 25-8-1961; *upakarmam* for those that follow *Vaidhyathaniam* on 25-8-1961; *upakarmam* for those that follow *Dharma-Sindhu* and *Nirnaya-Sindhu* on 26-8-1961; and *Gayatri Japam* on 26-8-1961.

Letter No. 28

Date—26-7-1961

Place—Kerala State

'May it please Your Holiness. May I submit my humble *namas-karam* to your lotus feet.

I beg to submit the following few lines for Your Holiness' kind consideration and to advise me the nature of steps that have to be taken by me or by my elder brother in this connection and who has right and competency to do the same.

I am a Tamil Brahman of Kerala State. My father left home in 1922, joined the mission, Madras, and was for some years in Mutt; thereafter, for some years on pilgrimage visiting different places in northern India. My elder brother who had been with my father during the above period returned home in the year 1935. Since then we had practically no news about my father's whereabouts and his movements coupled with the fact as to whether he is still alive or not.

My mother died in the year 1944. My family partition was also over in 1949-1950, and we are living as a divided family since then with due relationship between brothers and sisters. I am the youngest of the lot. Myself and my elder brother were conducting our mother's death anniversary (*sraddham*) separately since then.

Coming to the subject matter, I may submit that I am in a dilemma regarding my father's whereabouts and whether I should take that my father is still alive or not. In case, it has to be taken that my father could not be alive now, as per Your Holiness' view what steps and simple procedures have to be followed by me or by my elder brother for the conduct of death ceremony, such as funeral and its connected functions and annual *sraddha*. I submit that *Pithir tarpanam* on *sankramanam* and eclipse days (*grahana punya kalam*) is not being done by me or by my brother on account of indefiniteness about our father's position. Everyday when I think of my duty towards my late ancestors especially during the above auspicious days, I feel sorry that my hands have been tied up and I could do no *tarpanam*, to do my duty to my father's soul which will be now in suspension of my father. I doubt very much whether I have independent and inherent rights to do the rites to my ancestors in the absence of my elder brother's silent attitude towards my father's present position even though the partition is over long before ten years. I fear that my innocence and ignorance in this respect may not lead me to sin. In case, I have to take that my father is not alive now, I am anxious to do my duty to my father's soul which will be now in suspension. I request to enlighten me as to what is the procedure to be adopted in my present condition of a family of seven members with my limited income.

Further, I have also in view to conduct *Nandi sraddham* in the simplest form to please my ancestors at the time of the *upanayanam* ceremony of my son, which I have to do in one or two years' time. But I doubt whether I may have right to do the same since my brother has not done the same at the time of his son's *upanayanam*.

In case I have to take that my father is not alive, I may also be let known as to the auspicious day, month of period when the functions should be done, in such cases, for the present and yearly (*Mahalaya Paksham*).

Reply

Date—10-8-1961

'Dear Sir,

With reference to your letter dated 26-7-1961 stating that the whereabouts of your father are not known since 1935 and that you have had no news about him since then, I am directed to inform you as follows :

The authoritative slokamas as to what has to be done in such cases written on a separate paper are enclosed. You and your brother have to do the karmam from the beginning together. If both of you cannot join and do the karmam, each of you has to separately do everthing. Your *vadhyars* will be able to give you all the detail.'

Letters Nos. 29, 30, and 31 relate to enquiries regarding the correct date of the Rig and Yajur Veda upakarma.

VII CASE RECORDS OF SANKARA MATA, KUMBAKONAM MADRAS

Letter No. 1

Camp Nallilanthur

To

'M.R. Ry S. R. Iyer, Avl.
Madras.

'Sir,

Your application dated 23rd reached the mata. It was placed before His Mahasannidhanam. Marrying one's sister's daughter is not in according with the Sastras. I have been asked to intimate the same to you.'

Letter No. 2

Village M.

Date 27-1-1923

'The *sishya koti* of M. Thanyavur district present the application after having duly offered shastanga namaskarams.

Some of the purohits who were performing *upadhyayam* and other functions died sometime ago. A few of them have taken to meat and drink. We, therefore, were left without proper purohits. Coming to dire necessity, we invited one S. Dikshatar and his son, N. Dikshatar, from the neighbouring village of K to be our purohits. All our

religious functions are performed by these two for the last two or three years. These two have performed some yagnas. It seemed that in T, a well-to-do Brahman gentleman, had embraced Christianity, remained a Christian for many years and later decided to come back to Hindu fold. The readmission to Hinduism was performed on the 14th day of Kartik. We received a letter from T that N. Dikshatar was one of those priests who performed the ceremony. On enquiry, N. Dikshatar accepted it and said that he had committed a mistake by participating in the function and that he would accept any prayaschitta for it. He was also willing to distribute the fee of twenty rupees which he received for his services among the brahmans as an expiation. Accordingly, two or three Dikshatars of K did the dosha pratihara. But we are not certain whether the procedure followed by these Dikshatars is in accordance with the Sastras. So we have decided to appeal to Your Holiness for a decision in the matter.'

Reply

Date—27-1-1923

'The decision arrived at after consulting Dharma-satras *Atri Smriti-Prayaschitta Mayukam* : Since it has been interpreted that the person is one who left his caste, the *Chandrayana* is prescribed for any one who has come into bodily contact with the outcaste. Any who has *pratigraha* with him has to give away double the amount of money received from him and also observe *Chandrayana kricharam*. But since it is not possible to perform *Chandrayana*, it has been prescribed that fifty cows be given in *dana*. As fifty go *dana* is also not practicable, fifty go *mulya* will suffice. Since he has performed *homa* and other religious rites in an impure state he shall recite ten thousand japams.

Those who used his services in the performance of religious rites, had they not known that he was in an impure state no dosha is attached to them. Had they known they have to undergo the prayaschitta prescribed for such a fault.'

Camp

Date 4-12-1925

Letter No. 3

'To

M.R. Ry T. G. Avl.

S.

'Sir,

All the members of the Brahman Mandali of Madras Province, residents of S, are informed as follows :

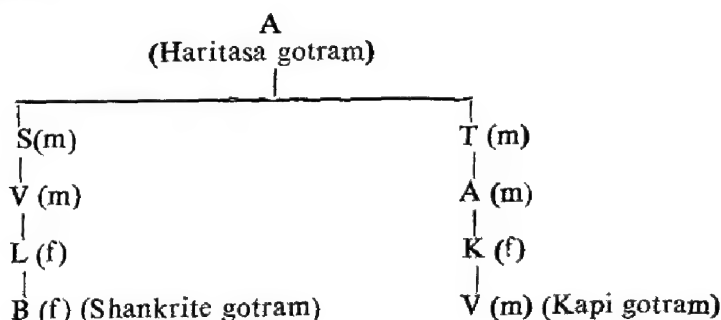
Your application was placed before His Mahasannidhanam on October 11th.

One Iyer, son of G. Sastri of T, is said to have undergone prayaschitta for having embraced Christianity. But the prayaschitta does not seem to have been accepted by all. It is understood that there are factions regarding even the few who have contact with him. Therefore, a man who has marital alliance in his family loses his birth right to perform his religious duties. But if he performs the prescribed expiatory ceremonies, the sin can be removed. Since his religious ceremonies have always been performed by the purohit of the Mandali, the latter also incurs the dosha. But it is to be remembered that it is judicious for those who are unable to perform the right dharmakarya not to let others incur dosha.'

Letter No. 4*

Date 23-4-1926

.....I am anxious to ascertain from the expert in Dharma-sastras attached to the mata whether there is any objection according to the sastras to have a marriage performed between the last two parties :



Reply

Camp—M

Date 2-5-1926

'Sir,

Your letter dated 27-4-1926 was placed before His Sannidhanam. There is a brother-sister (*bhava*) relationship between the last two mentioned in your letter but as there are instances available in sishtachara that such marriages had been in vogue and acting according to sishtachara is acceptable by the Dharma-sastras, it is informed that it is sastraic to contract the above marriage alliance. Such is the decision of the Dharma-sabha of Sri Mahasannidhanam.'

*Fragment of letter from M.V., Madras.

Letter No. 5

Camp—V

Date 21-6-1928

‘To

M.R. Ry, S.V.

Sir,

Your telegram was placed before His Mahasannidhanam. It is understood that the late Maharaja of married in course of his foreign travels, a lady from a caste other than his own. A son born of that marriage is not considered to be of the same caste status as that of the Maharaja himself. The sastras prescribe that a son born of a father and mother of the same caste is the one that is entitled to be called *gnarisaputra*. As such, the son of the Maharaja cannot be considered as a *gnarisaputra*. In the absence of *gnarisaputra*, it is a *gnati* (of the same gotra) who is entitled to perform the obsequies. Therefore, it is the *gnati* of the late Maharaja who is entitled to perform the obsequies of the late Maharaja. Such is the decision arrived at by the Dharma-sabha of Sri Mahasannidhanam.’

Letter No. 6

Date 5-7-1945

‘My wife died three years ago. I have three sons. As there is no other female in the house to look after my children, I am desirous of marrying again. But no suitable girl is available for a widower. One of my relatives has agreed to give his daughter in marriage to me. Our gotras are of the *Saptarisheya* and *Traiya-risheya* types. I am not certain whether the sastras sanction such a marriage. I, therefore, request that the matter be placed before His Mahasannidhanam.’

- 1 Can marriages be contracted in gotras with seven *rishis* and three *rishis* ?
- 2 Can a girl be adopted and the marriage performed ?
- 3 What is the prayaschitta prescribed for such a marriage ?
- 4 Can the marriage be performed after the prayaschitta ?

Reply

Date 9-7-45

‘Your letter dated 5-7-45 was placed before His Sannidhanam. It is prescribed in the sastras that such marriages are prohibited between the *Saptarisheya* and *Traiya-risheya* of *Kasyapa* gotram.

Girls are not entitled for adoption. Such is the decision of the Sastra-sabha.'

Letter No. 7

Date 24-7-46

'To

S. N.

Sir,

Your letter reached us. In the matter of marriage alliance between Tiruvannamalai Brahatcharanam and Palaiyanattu Brahat-charanam you are informed to act in accordance with tradition and with the consent of your relatives. Such is the decision of Sri Mahasannidhanam.'

Letter No. 8

Date 2-2-1951

'From

R.R.

I am a Brahman Vadama. My native place is M in Thanjavur district. I want to give my daughter in marriage to a boy of Suklayajur varna. I request you kindly to let me know whether it can be done.

The plight of Brahman girls to be married is not unknown to Your Holiness. If a girl's father is not in a position to give varadakshina, both the girl and her parents are ruined. It will be a great help if Your Holiness can do something about this evil.'

Reply

Date 23-2-1951

'It is against the sastras.'

Letter No. 9

Date 31-3-1951

'I am a resident of N of Mannargudi taluk. I have no sons. I am desirous of adopting a boy. There is no suitable boy available among my brother's sons or gnati. My wife's sister has a son and it has been decided that I should adopt him.

If the adoption ceremony has to be performed in accordance with the sastraic rites, my sister-in-law's husband is not living with her. On account of domestic misunderstanding, he is living in the Sankara Matam at B. I am not certain whether the rites can be performed without him. The party has another son also.

I, therefore, request you to advise me on the matter in consultation with the pandits of your sabha. Does the wife have any right in the matter or the elder brother? I request you to elucidate me on the above points.'

Reply

'Your letter regarding the adoption was placed before His Mahasannidhanam.

The adoption can proceed only on the consent of the boy's father. Such is the verdict of the sastras. It is absolutely necessary to contact him, in whichever place he may be, and obtain his consent for the same.'

Letter No. 10

Date—28-10-1949

'My friend Mr. Mudaliar is desirous of contracting a marriage between his son and the daughter of his mother's sister. He is in doubt whether the above alliance will be in accordance with the sastras. Many persons express the opinion that it can be done. A few are against it. Mr. Mudaliar is willing to obey the instructions of Your Holiness in this matter. I, therefore, request Your Holiness to send a reply and prasadam.'

Reply

Date—29-10-1949

'Your letter of 28-10-1949 was placed before His Holiness. The Dharma-sabha has decided that the marriage alliance referred to in your letter is not in accordance with the sastras.'

Letter No. 11

Date—28-3-1947

'I request you to kindly let me know the answers for the following questions in consultation with Sri Acharya.

- 1 Taking into consideration the present *kala-desa-vartamana* can the Smartha Brahmins of South India ignore such divisions as Vadama, Brahacharanam, Ashtasahasram and have intersect marriages?
- 2 Specifically, I am a Vadama. Can I give my daughter in marriage to an Ashtasahasram boy of a reputable family? Will it be sanctioned by the sastras?

Reply

Date—30-3-1947

'It is informed that intersect marriages, such as between Vadama and Prahacharanam, Ashtasahasram, are not desirable. Such is the opinion of His Holiness.'

Letter No. 12

Date—1-1-1947

Reply

Reply to the letter of R.S.S.

'Your letter was placed before His Holiness. Regarding the questions on Dharma-sastra :

- (i) He has to bathe in accordance with the sastras in Sri Ramasetu or the Ganga.
- (ii) After bathing ten times as is prescribed for prayaschitta he should on a proper date perform *Prajapatya Chandrayana, krichranushtana prayaschitta*.
- (iii) The man should not regard the woman as a wife. He should have no physical contact with her nor shall he use her services in cooking and other religious ceremonies. She should be maintained as a maid servant by giving food and clothes. She should be lodged in a shed near the cattle shed of the house. She should not be allowed to enter the kitchen nor should be allowed to see the cooking being done. The prayaschitta should be performed in a liberal manner and extreme care should be taken about her segregation. These apply only if she has not conceived by her contact with the Sudra.
- (iv) The husband of the above woman has to perform *Prajapatya krichranushtana prayaschitta* for having lived with a woman who had contract with a Sudra. Such is the decision of the Dharma Sabha of His Holiness.'

Letter No. 13

Date—20-7-1947

'It is four years since I was married second time. My wife has a younger sister of marriageable age. My elder brother has two sons. Is it permissible according to Sastras to get my wife's younger sister married to the son of my elded brother ? Will we incur any dosha by doing so ? I request you kindly to advise me on the matter. My gotra is Kaundinya and my second wife's is Bharadwaja.'

Reply

The marriage cannot be contracted.'

Letter No. 14*

Date—21-9-1946

‘Sir,

Regarding the question of readmitting the Harijans who having embraced Christianity, desire to do so and the details of the procedure relating to it, your letter dated 2-9-1946 was placed before His Holiness. The details of the procedure are as follows :

- 1 They have to live in ritual purity for three days taking only rice gruel.
- 2 On the fourth day they shall have a shave and a bath.
- 3 On the same day they shall bathe thirty-six times in the sea or in a river with their priest (Valluvan) performing the prescribed *sankalpa* for them saying as follows :
‘For the sin of having abandoned Hindu faith and for the sin of having adopted Christianity and living according to its tenets let me be freed. Let me be absolved of all sin and be purified. In order to attain that purity I am taking this bath.’
- 4 After bathing they shall go to their caste temple and have a look at their faces in a mirror. All their relatives and castemen shall see their faces in the mirror.
- 5 In the same temple they shall look at their reflections in an iron pan filled with oil.
- 6 The oil in the pan shall be used for lamps in the temple. They shall perform puja for the gods. They and all their relatives shall take a spoonful of *abhisheka* water of the temple.
- 7 They shall tie *talis* to their wives in the same temple.
- 8 They shall partake of the *naivedya* prasadam of the temple with their castemen.
- 9 Before partaking of the prasadam they shall feed the temple cows with grass and take *gomulya* as tirtha.’

Letter No. 15

Date—31-10-1947

‘Your letter regarding the obsequies to be performed for your father about whom there has been no news whatsoever for the last thirty years was placed before His Holiness.

In the case of parents about whom no news is received for fifteen years, it is permitted by the sastras to perform the obsequies in the

*The letter is addressed to the Secretary, Gandhi Ashram.

sixteenth year. If, however, during the fifteen years some information had been received about them, the obsequies can only be performed after fifteen years beginning from the date of such information.

In the case your father, who left his house thirty years ago, you have said that no information whatsoever was received during the period. It is, therefore, permissible to have the obsequies performed for him. Unless and until you receive information by post or otherwise that he has become a sanyasi, the obsequies meant for a sanyasi cannot be performed for him. You will have to perform the ceremonies prescribed for the householders by the sastras.'

Letter No. 16

Date—12-9-1950

'Your letter dated Sravan 19th was placed before His Holiness. A sanyasi shall on no account cross the boundaries of a village during the *Chaturmasya vratam*. If he does so, the expiration prescribed for it is *Prajapatya krichranustana*. Sanyasis have to perform it fully; that is, for three days he shall do biksha in the afternoon and shall eat nothing during the nights. He shall not eat at midday for next three days; but at a time when the sun's rays do not touch the ground but only the tree tops, shall he take his biksha. For the next three days he shall eat only that which is given to him, at his place, by others and for the next three days he shall fast completely. This is *Prajapatya krichranustana*. There is no alternate expiation prescribed for the sanyasi. You are to do so accordingly.'

Letter No. 17

Date—28-7-1951

'Your letter dated 23-7-1951 was placed before His Holiness. It can only be surmised that your caste is known as '24 *gotram* or 24 houses'. If, however, you want to adopt such names as *Sadhu Chettis* or *Telugu Chettis*, as is in vogue, it is necessary that your caste members should arrive at a decision in the conference which is to be held in the near future. It is also necessary that the entire caste should act in unison regarding the decision. Such is the opinion of His Holiness which is being communicated to you.'

REMARKS

Letter No. 5 of the correspondence quoted above reveals clearly the extent to which the mata as the custodian of tradition and usages extends its influence in such vital matters as declaring the appropriate relatives to perform obsequies for a Maharaja. The right of the lineage kinsmen might not have been declared in such an unquestion-

ing manner by any other organization except the mata; for the latter is supposed to have no vested interest in the matter.

Letter No. 14 is interesting in that the Sankara Mata at Kumbakonam extended the benefit of advice even to the lowest caste, namely, the Harijans. It also confirms the aim of these institutions which in the main is to keep all the sections of Hindu society intact and integrated. A similar view was expressed in the letters written by the Dharmadhikari of Sankara Mata, Sringeri, to the members of the caste council of the Akkasalis of S town*. The procedure laid down for the readmission of the Christian Harijans into Hindu society embodies the idea of a new birth and the admission of the new born into its own social fold. It is a ceremony involving the first stage in the rituals centering round the life cycle of an individual, namely, birth. The individual, who was a Christian, is admitted into the same caste and sub-caste from which he seceded at first.

Letter No. 14 from a member of the Mudaliar caste is of value at it is the solitary example from a member of a high caste non-Brahman seeking advice from the Brahman mata.

VIII CASE RECORDS OF MURGHARALENDRA MATA (VIRA-SAIVAS), CHITRADURGA—MYSORE STATE

Petitions for investiture of linga (lingadharana) from non-Lingayat

Caste members

1 Place—Village H. Taluk P. Tumkur District

Date—23-5-1958

(The petitioner is one M, son of M, Gauda of the Kunchitika Okkaliga caste)

'We are following the customs of the Vira-saivas and we engage Lingayat priest (*jangamas*) to officiate in our marriage and other religious functions. But we have had no Siva-diksha. We understand that your mata has given Siva-diksha to our community members in H and H taluks. We have been informed of it. So we request that your *mahasamasthanam* will perform Siva-diksha to us also and enrol us as Vira-saivas. We number about fifty individuals.'

DECISION

Siva-diksha cannot be given to fifty persons only. The petitioner should try to bring the whole of his community in the village in order to get the benefit of Siva-diksha.

*Case No. 2 Letter No. 5 Memorandum dated 24-7-1938 sent by the Dharmadhikari to the Akkasala Panchayat of S. town.

2 Place—Village G. D. Holalkere Taluk, Chitradurga

Date—7-5-1958

Petitioners are the important members (*mukhandaru*) of the Kunchchitika Okkaliga caste. These members have applied for Siva-diksha saying that they are strict vegetarians and followers of the tenets of Vira-saivism and have thus qualified themselves for the initiation.

3 Taluks of H and H

Date—not given

About one thousand individuals of the Kunchchitika Okkaliga and the Namadari castes have applied to the mata for Siva-diksha.

4 Eleven individuals of the Kunchchitika Okkaliga caste had taken Siva-diksha in 1959. The village officers of the village have certified that these persons were following the ways of the Lingayats and, therefore, they have accepted them as such after the Siva-diksha.

5 There is a reference that in the village of J Hosadurga taluk, about 2,000 individuals belonging to the Kunchchitika Okkaliga and Namadari castes were given Siva-diksha in 1946.

6 A letter subscribed by the left thumb impressions of 350 individuals of the Reddy caste, residing in nine divisions (*magani*) of K. T and N taluks was sent to the mata for necessary action. The letter is an agreement that they would act in accordance with the instructions to be given by the thirteen members of the Suha-Mata appointed by the Murghi Mata. These were not given lingadharana as they had no relatives who had already embraced Vira-saiva faith and were the disciples of the mata. But they were given the *rudraksha* and *vibhuti* to worship as a preliminary to lingadharana. They can get Siva-diksha after twelve or fifteen years when the mata is convinced and subject to confirmation by their village officers, that they are earnest and steadfast in pursuing the ways of the Vira-saiva faith. (In a latter record, it was found that a few of the applicants were given the benefit of Siva-diksha at a later date).

DETAILS OF A FEW CASES REPORTED TO THE MATA FOR DECISION

Case No. 1: Village N. Taluk. H. Chitradurga district

Date—20-6-1952

The villagers of N complained against one T. The accused being a Lingayat has illicit connection with a non-Lingayat woman. So the villagers appealed to the mata to enquire and take necessary action against him.

Case No. 2 : Village D. Taluk H.

Date—19-10-1957

One D.M.M. has complained that K.D., son of K. and resident of B.H., took meals in the house of a non-Lingayat. So the complainant reported the matter to the mata. The mata ordered the offender to take lingadharana again. (In such cases, it is necessary for the person to obtain the permission of the mata. He has to pay a fee of Rs. 2 to the priest and also provide a meal for his caste-man).

Case No. 3 : Village D. Davanageri Taluk, Chitradurga district

Date—8-8-1949

One K has complained to the mata that the local priest C did not attend a birth ceremony in his house. So he requested the mata to enquire into the affair. The mata issued a notice to the priest and recorded the latter's statement. The mata gave him a warning and instructions not to repeat the offence.

Case No. 4 : Village H. Taluk H.

Date—20-6-1952

K, son of G, and his elder sister were placed under a ban (*mana*) for a caste offence. The woman was living with a non-Lingayat man and her brother was keeping social contact with her. Later, these persons requested the mata to give them expiation and lift the ban. The mata complied with their request and issued purification letter in their favour. The party had to perform abhisheka to the linga and warned her not to repeat the offence.

Case No. 5 : Village M. Taluk H., Chitradurga district

Date—24-4-1958

A widow (Lingayat) had an abortion. The villagers complained to the mata. The latter made enquiries and levied a fine on her and warned her not to repeat the offence.

Case No. 6 : Village D. Taluk A., Chitradurga district.

Date—1-6-1958

T, son of J.D., had an illicit affair with a widow, N. The villagers had complained of it to the mata. The latter sent a notice and held an enquiry on 6-6-1956. T admitted his guilt and gave an agreement of good conduct in future.

Case No. 7 : Village K. Taluk H., Chitradurga district.

Date—24-7-1956

The chief of the Valmiki Mata* has sent the petition. A member of his caste K applied to the caste organization (*kat-tamane*) for permission to marry a divorcee by the *sir udikki* method. It is not in conformity with the custom prevailing amongst them. So the chief has asked for advice from the mata regarding the propriety of giving sanction for such a marriage.

Case No. 8 : Village N. Taluk H.

Date—24-12-1944

An employee of the local mata, V, is the petitioner. There was a quarrel on account of land between the petitioner and one K. G. The latter had a *tom-tom* beaten in the village to the effect that he had struck the petitioner with chappals and, therefore, the latter was under pollution. (It is interesting that a Lingayat incurs *chappal* pollution, padaraksha dosha, as much as any other Hindu casteman. Leather is not considered defiling by the Lingayats and hence the pollution is not incurred merely because of the person's contact with leather chappals but the act of beating with them is considered derogatory and in the case of a Lingayat the *linga*, which he wears, is defiled by the act. In other words it is the social personality of the individual that suffers degradation.)

DECISION

Notices were sent to both the parties by the mata and a ban was placed on the offender K. G.

Case No. 9 : Village—P. Chitradurga taluk

Petitioner is B's daughter G.

N.L., son of S and husband of the petitioner, had complained to the mata regarding her conduct. An enquiry was conducted and G was found guilty. She was ordered to take slander riddance (*aparada nivarti*). She was an indigent woman, and was not in a position to pay the prescribed fine and perform slander riddance. But to be an outcaste is extremely painful to her and so she had appealed to the mata to lift the ban (*bahiskara*) and readmit her.

*The members of the Valmiki mata use such titles as Nayaks and Palayagars. The caste has an organization called *kattemane*. There is a chief (*patel*) presiding over it. In Chitradurga district the caste owes allegiance to the Vira-saiva Mata of Murgharajendra at Chitradurga.

The villagers who seem to have been consulted by the mata gave a statement that they were not willing to recommend the lifting of the ban placed on her. However, later on, she was excused and was accorded slander riddance.

Case No. 10 : Village C. Taluk H.

Date—12-11-1945

The villagers of C complained to the mata regarding the conduct of Gauda K. The latter had a widow living in his house. She conceived and had an abortion. The villagers made an enquiry and fined him Rs. 15. They have appealed to the mata to issue orders for his boycott and subsequent purification. The fine is paid to the mata. The priest, who would perform the prescribed purification, would be paid by the parties. The latter have to give a community feast as a sign of their having regained the caste status.

Case No. 11 : Village K. Taluk H.

Date—15-12-1954

The priest of the village had performed Investiture of Linga (lingadharana) without the prior permission of the mata. The villagers complained to the mata. On enquiry, the priest accepted his guilt and paid Rs. 25 as a fee. He requested the mata to issue a purification letter to absolve him of the effects of his guilt.

Case No. 12 : Village L. Taluk H.

Date—21-1-1951

The villagers of L had complained to the mata regarding the conduct of one S. wife of K. She had illicit connection with one S.L. The villagers sent the complaint to the mata to make an enquiry. The mata asked her to be present at the enquiry but she did not attend it. Therefore, boycott order (*mana hukum*) was served on her.

Case No. 13 : Village G.

Date—1-2-1952

One N.T. had committed a caste offence. He was of the Lingayat community. The villagers complained of his conduct to the mata. N.T. went to the mata and obtained a purification letter.

But when he returned to the village, his community members required of him a community meal in lieu of the fine. He refused to comply with their demand. So they complained to the mata.

Case No. 14 : Village N. Taluk H.

Date—14-2-1958

The petitioner is one S, son of S. There was a quarrel in which the other person used abusive language. Therefore, the petitioner took his chappals to beat him. The villagers boycotted him for having incurred chappal pollution. He has written to the mata requesting the samathanan to give him purification.

Case No. 15 : Village T. Taluk H.

Date 17-1-1957

The villagers of T complained against one H, wife of T.K. She had illicit connection with a man of the Valmiki caste, by name R., son of D. Her daughter is married, but the accused refused to send her with her husband. She also abused her daughter's husband and drove him away. She was summoned by the panchayat for an enquiry. She abused the panchayat and refused to comply with their demand. Therefore, the panchayat sent the request to the mata to do the needful.

The mata issued three notices to her. Finally, she gave an agreement that she would sever her connection with the man of the lower caste and send her daughter to her husband's house. The villagers admitted her into the community (samajam) after she had performed expiation.*

(In this case the accused is guilty of two offences, viz., (i) involving personal morals and (ii) having contact with a man of a lower caste. Both of them are punishable by the caste panchayat. In addition to these, the woman refused to fulfil her obligation as the wife's mother. Therefore, the community rallied to the side of the injured party, i.e., son-in-law of the woman, and held an enquiry.)

*On 11-7-1961 when this letter was being read out to me, a couple from the village G stayed into the hall. They had come on a pilgrimage visit to the mata. They could recognize the details of the case immediately and the man said that H kept to the agreement.

Case No. 16 : Village N. Taluk H.**Date—13-9-1951**

The villagers of N complained against a Lingayat woman, called K. She had illicit connections with a man of Valmiki caste. She removed the linga also. Later, on her request, a priest, called K, agreed to invest her with a linga. So the villagers appealed to the mata not to readmit her into the community. One of the witnesses cited by the villagers gave a statement that she was not a Lingayat originally. She was boycotted by the mata and was not given linga-dharana.

Case No. 17 : Village H. Taluk K.**Date—25-3-1953**

The villagers of H complained against one M. The latter took out his chappals to beat one M.R. Therefore, the villagers wrote to the mata that M should be boycotted as he had gone against Vira-saiva dharma. When the mata summoned both the parties for enquiry, M.R. did not appear. So the mata placed him under boycott.

Case No. 18 : Village M. Taluk H.**Date—5-7-1953**

The villagers of M lodged a complaint against one S, wife of T.K. (a resident of R. village). She lived at M with a Lingayat. The villagers requested the mata to hold an enquiry. On enquiry it was proved that S had left her husband to live at M. The accused and her partner were served with boycott orders. Later, the parties applied for purification letter and paid Rs. 25 as fine. The villagers agreed to admit them into the caste and purification letter was issued by the mata.

Case No. 19 : Village A. Taluk H.**Date—3-10-1952**

Fifteen members of the village A signed and sent a petition to the mata regarding one V. She refused to send her married daughter to her husband's house. On a previous occasion, the villagers had advised her to do so but she did not comply with.

An enquiry was held and boycott order was passed on her. The accused left the village and went to live at C. Later, she admitted her fault, paid the fine to the mata and obtained the purification letter.

Case No. 20 : Village K. Taluk H.

Date—26-4-1944

The petitioner is one M.K. He complained that one Th had agreed to give her daughter in marriage to his younger brother and took some articles and Rs. 50 cash. But she had her daughter married to another man. So M.K. requested the mata to enquire into the matter and make her return the articles and cash. On enquiry he denied having taken any money or articles from the petitioner on false pretences. From the records it appears that no injunction was passed on her by the mata.

Case No. 21 : Village H. Taluk C.

Date—2-5-1948

Two persons beat each other with chappals. One came to the mata and took purification letter. The other did not. The priest of the village participated in a function at the latter's house. So a member of the community complained to the mata regarding the conduct of the priest. The priest, on enquiry, admitted his fault and paid the fine. He was warned by the mata.

Case No. 22 : Village D. Taluk H.

Date—20-11-1949

One S.G., daughter of N, was placed under boycott. She had two sons and two daughters. The children were of age and were given investiture of linga (lingadharana). The villagers complained to the mata that this was irregular as S.G. was still under boycott. On enquiry, the priest pleaded that he acted under the orders of the Swami of Kumbakonam Mata (Vira-saiva) who was present at the village at that time.

Case No. 23 : Village H. Taluk H.

Date—20-12-1956

The petition is from the members of the Valmiki caste. One T complained that K and R were living in adultery. The caste panchayat ordered her to pay a fine. K had to marry her according to sirudikki method. The parties accepted the verdict. The caste members requested the mata to issue a purification letter in their favour. (It is interesting that the Valmiki caste which is a non-Lingayat one appealed to the Vira-saiva Mata as a final authority on affairs of their caste.)

Case No. 24 : Village H. K. Taluk C.

Date—22-8-1956

The petition is from the members of the Valmiki caste (Valmiki Mata Balagastaru). They referred a case of chappal beating to the mata to decide. The mata, however, wrote back asking the caste panchayat to do it.

Note

There were six bundles ranging from 1940-1960 of letters relating to lingadharana and cases of chappal beating, use of abusive language, adultery, contact with prohibited persons, etc. It was said that very often such complaints were disposed of on the spot by any one of the representatives of the mata. One bundle contained letters from H. Taluk relating to 1946. There were 2,000 applications for lingadharana and 122 letters relating to cases of chappal beating, etc.

				No. of appli- cations for lingadharana	No. of cases relating to caste offences
Second bundle	..	..	..	70	152
Third bundle	..	..	..	90	102
Fourth bundle	..	..	..	116	119
Fifth bundle	..	..	..	84	86
Sixth bundle	..	..	..	72	42

IX
 Tabular statement of cases recorded in the Sri Jagadguru Taralabala Mata (Vira-saiva) Strigeri—Chitradurga District, Mysore State
 (See F.N.) Year 1941-1942

Sr. No.	Taluk and village	Accused	Plaintiff	Nature of complaint	Caste	Case number- & date as in the files of the mata	Remarks
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1	Ariskeri	KV & M	Matatha M	Disobeyed the orders of the <i>mata</i>	Lingayat	24.1.35	Accepted the fault
2	Kadur	M B O	Villagers	Disobeyed the decision of the panchayat	Accused Linga	24.1.35	Accepted the fault and gave an agreement of good conduct to the mata
3	Davanagere	K M daughter N	K	Illegitimate conception		29.5.40	Case dismissed as parties went to court
4	Chitradurga	G V son of H	Angidi A. Saheb and J. Saheb	Quarrel	Pl. Musslims	2-1-41	Compromise to be effected by the parties
5	Kadur	H. Akkasale V.	K D V	A widow living with the accused	Accused Goldsmith	11.41-42	The accused agreed to marry her
6	Chitradurga	B D & R	Villagers	Case of chappal beating	Accused Lingayats	24.11-41	Decided
7	Chitradurga	M D	K	Case of chappal beating	Lingayat	10.41-42	Decided
8	Chitradurga	N C V	Matatha Murthi & villagers	Case of chappal beating	Acc. Lingayat	18-40-41	Decided

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
9	Holalkere	D Guru S. M, B & B	Villagers	Had contact with B who was under boycott	Acc. Lingayats	20. 40-41	Decided
10	Chitradurga	M D B	Villagers	Accused of sinning against guru and community	Lingayat	31-5-38	Decided
11	Chitradurga	S R son of M	C	Case of chappal beating	Lingayat	39. 41-42	Accused fined
12	Holalkere	H K N	N's son L	Regarding betrothal of his daughter	Lingayat	51. 41-42	Accused agreed to give his daughter in marriage
13	Holalkere	K E S	A S & Others	Illicit connection	Lingayat	68. 41-42	Accepted fault and gave an agreement of good conduct
14	Holalkere	K A A	Villagers	Illicit connection with H C	Acc. Lingayat	116. 41-42	Decided
15	Holalkere	G Gauda R	R. son of B	Illicit connection with H C	Lingayat	41-42	Decided
16	Chitradurga	K K Sister of C	T C	Immoral conducts	Lingayat	700. 41-42	Decided
17	Chitradurga	S A E	Nayak Mandali	Illicit connection with a woman of the caste	Acc. Lingayat	41-42	Decided

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
18	Holalkere	M P	Villagers	Offence against <i>mata</i> & <i>kula</i>	Lingayat	630. 41-42	Decided
19	Chitradurga	M Patel B & B	Villagers	Quarrel ensuing on the non-payment of 'jola' loan resulting in chappal beating	Lingayat	25. 41-42	Decided
20	Holalkere	K M	Villagers	Illicit connection with H complaint made after 5 years	Akasaru (washerman)	5. 12-43	Decided
21	Holalkere	K M (brother of plaintiff)	Patel K	Chappal beating	Lingayat	14. 42-43	Decided
22	Chitradurga	M K	Patel N & Villagers	Illicit connection with a woman of lower caste		1. 42-43	Accepted the fault and gave an agreement
23	Chitradurga	J Guru S	M	Divorce & maintenance	Lingayat	42-43	She agreed to take Rs 500 to divorce and give her consent to her husband to marry again
24	Davanagere	B G B	Villagers	Contact with a non-Lingayat	Acc. Lingayat	54. 41-42	As it is the first offence, given a warning
25	Davanagere	U R	Disciples of the <i>mata</i>	She was a bad character and public notices were printed regarding her	Lingayat	12. 42-48 (18. 9-42)	Judgment was given 2-12-42

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
26	Holalkere	J M's sister K	Villagers	Illicit connection with a man of Nayak caste		53. 41-42	Accepted fault and gave an agreement of safe conduct. Brother stood as surety. She divorced her husband & did not claim maintenance
27	Chennagiri	G D H	Villagers	Immoral living with woman of lower caste.		30. 41-42	The <i>mata</i> decided to give expiation to the accused
28	Chennagiri	L R R	S V	Immoral conduct & illegitimate conception*	Lingayat	849. 45-45	(Remarks below) *
29	Chitradurga	S O C	Disciples of the <i>mata</i>	Illicit connection with a man of Goldsmith caste.	Lingayat	30. 42-43	Decided to give the required <i>prapashchitta</i> to the accused
30*	Chitradurga	M M M	R (Chairman of VIII panchayat)	The accused did not participate in the feast given by the plaintiff in a social function	Lingayat	9. 42-43	Accused pleaded indisposition and no bad intention

F.N. The details furnished in pages 76, 77, 78 are reproduced in the form furnished by the authorities of the *mata*.

*The incident happened in 1910. A statement was given to the *mata* by the accused on 3-8-1910 accepting her guilt. A copy of the statement was required by the party in connection with a Court case in 1946. The *mata* supplied the copy.

Tabular statement of cases recorded by Sri Jagadguru Taralabala mata (Vira-saiva) Sirigeri—Chitradurga District, Mysore, 1953-1954

Sr. No.	Taluk & village	Accused	Plaintiff	Nature of complaint	Caste of the Parties	Case Number and date in the files of mata	Remarks
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1	Holalkere	-D	Gauda M & R	Gauda S N	Jivanamsa for their mother	Lingayat	1571.5-54
2	Holalkere	-A	K S of N	M & N	Regarding lease amount	Accused L	89.53-54
3	Holalkere	-I	H & B	S & R	Alimony	Lingayat	5653-54
4	Holalkere	-K	P & S	Villagers	Case of chappal beating	Acc. Lingayat	604. 52-53
5	Holalkere	-T	N & B's wife S	Villagers	Case of chappal beating	Acc. Lingayat	694. 51-52
6	Holalkere	-H	G N	Matatha B	Use of abusive language	Pltff. Lingayat	274. 53-54
7	Holalkere	-HE	L & B	H'N & S	Use of abusive language	Lingayat	211. 53-54
8	Holalkere	-HE	N. B's son B	G S	Case of chappal beating	Lingayat	577. 52-54
9	Holalkere	-K	S B	V wife of B	Partition of property (brothers)	Lingayat	154. 53-54
10	Chitradurga	-RH	Villagers of A	Patel S	Partition of property	Pltff. Lingayat	155. 53-54

IASI/68-7

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
11	Chitradurga -H	MNC, DN & N	SL	Case of chappal beating	Plttf. Lingayat	78, 51-52	Accused warned
12	Chitradurga -S	Pallaki S	Pa	Partition of property (brothers)	Lingayat		Judgment given
13	Chitradurga -M	N	E & N	Partition of property	Lingayat		
14	Chitradurga -HK	HH B	HNB (cousins)	Partition of property	Lingayat	434, 52-53	Case pending in court
15	Chitradurga -P	S	SH	Case of chappal beating	Acc. Lingayat	-- --	Evidence wanting
16	Chitradurga -S	C	M	Case of chappal beating	Lingayat	-- --	Accused warned and fined Rs. 10
17	Chitradurga -A	N	M	Case of chappal beating		-- --	Accused warned
18	Jagalur -B	VTB	B	Case of chappal beating	Lingayat	497, 53-54	Pending
19	Chennagiri, Shimoga Dt.	SLC	RCB	Case of chappal beating	Lingayat	153, 54 ¹¹ 54	Notice given on 11-8-53
20	Chennagiri, Shimoga Dt.	GS	S	Use of abusive language	Lingayat	50, 53-54	Judgment given
21	Chennagiri, Shimoga Dt.	G	B	Accused of illicit connection with a non-Lingayat	Lingayat	330, 53-54	Notice given

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
22	Chennagiri, -G Shimoga Dt.	N & B	YK	Case of chappal beating	Acc. Lingayat	101. 53-54	Notice given
23	Chennagiri, -A Shimoga Dt.	B	Patel S	Accused for leaving her husband	Lingayat	475. 52-53	Pending
24	Chennagiri, -M Shimoga Dt.	M & C	Malatha KS		Lingayat	875. 52-53	Notice given
25	Chennagiri, -G Shimoga Dt.	Patel S	Matatha M	Case of chappal beating	Lingayat	859. 52-53	Notice given and both parties warned
26	Chennagiri, -B Shimoga Dt.	NS	Villagers	Case of chappal beating	Acc. Lingayat	563. 52-53	Notice given and accused fined
27	Chennagiri, -G Shimoga Dt.	GB	SB	Use of abusive language	Lingayat	47. 53-54	Judgment given
28	Chennagiri, Shi- moga Dt. -V	NM	S	Partition of property	Lingayat	57. 53-54	Judgment given
29	Holkere -C	MB	B	Illicit connection with his wife	Lingayat	168. 53-54	Pending
30	Chennagiri -N	B	V	Partition of property (brothers)	Lingayat	162. 53-54	Pending
31	Chennagiri, Shi- moga Dist. -K	TH	Gauda S.	Maintenance of pa- rents	Lingayats	200. 53-54	Pending
32	Davanagere -KB	Ledders of the villagers	RS	Non-payment of ye- arly contribution (aya)	Lingayats	159. 53-54	Pending
33	Devanagere -Y	TR	PK	Non-payment of ye- arly Contribution (aya)	Lingayats	18. 53-54	Accused warned

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
34	Devanagere -D	SB	KGS	Case of chappal beating	Lingayats	21. 53-54	Accused warned
35	Devanagere -K	M	C	Case of illicit conception	Lingayats	29. 53-54	Notice given
36	Devanagere -S	DMN & B	Patel N	Case of chappal beating	Lingayats	845. 52-53	Notice given
37	Devanagere -N	Villagers	HS	Case of chappal beating	Pf. Ling.	85. 53-54	Judgment given
38	Devanagere -C	B	M	Partition of property	Lingayat	283. 53-54	Judgement given
39	Chitradurga -S	JN	R	Case of readmission after a ban.*	Lingayat	294. 53-54	Judgement given
40	Chitradurga -B	AR	BL	? Rs. 300	Lingayat	293. 53-54	—
41	Holalkere taluk -S	Matatha M	MT	Case regarding the order of distribution of betel leaves in a social function**	Lingayat	212. 53-54	—

Note : Data required for the blank columns were not available in the records of the mata. Therefore there may be discrepancies.

* The case refers to the appropriateness of the priest attending a religious function in the house of a man who, having been placed under a ban is later purified and desires reentry into the caste. It is called community forming (*balaga madotu*, 'balaga'—community, 'madotu'—act of forming or reforming).

** In village communities as well as in the caste groups, intra-caste and inter-family status is determined by the order of precedence in the distribution of betel leaves—a mark of respect in social functions. This principle is known in the Karnataka region by the term *Vilyam hakku*, 'vilyam' meaning presentation and 'hakku'—right.

X
Consolidated statement of cases classified under different categories
1958—1960

Sr. No.	Taluk and Village	Accused	Plaintiff	Nature of Complaint	Caste	Case No. and date	Remarks
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1	Chikmagalur Taluk	KM	Villagers	Transgression of social rules, (<i>achara vayarahara</i>)		60-59-60	Under consideration
2	Chitradurga	S N's wife and others	JV	Case of chappal beating	Pluff, Lingayat	59	Under consideration
3	Davanagere	KB	MB	Case of chappal beating	Lingayat	59	Under consideration 15-9-59 reminder
4	Chennagiri	BKTS	MM	Breach of trust—promised to give his daughter in marriage and did not	Lingayat	205-59-60	Notice issued
5	Chitradurga	LC	Villagers	Case of chappal beating		210-59-60	Decided
6	Kadur	BSS	SB	Case of chappal beating	Lingayat	232-59-60	Decided
7	Chennagiri	HGSS	KGV	Contact with persons under boycott	Lingayat	118-59-60	Decided
8	Chennagiri	SCSC & others	Villagers	Contact and participation in socio-religious functions with persons under boycott	Accused Lingayat	227-59-60	Decided

(1)	(2)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
9	Davanagere taluk -K	KDS & K Villagers	Case of chappal beating	Accused Lingayat	237. 59-60	Decided on 7-7-60. Accused fined.
10	Chennagiri -M	MS KS	Use of abusive language	Lingayats	256. 59-60	Decided by the village panchayat and intimated to the mata
11	Hoiakere -T	B N	Case of chappal beating	Lingayat	371	Decided
12	Chitradurga P	KMB & K N & others	Case of chappal beating	Acc. Lingayat	261. 59-60	Decided
13	Harapanchalli K	S Villagers	Illegitimate conception by the accused widow	Lingayat	386. 59-60	Decided by the village panchayat & intimated to the mata
14	Belur, Hassan Dist. -M	MM Villagers	Illegitimate conception by the accused widow		444. 59-60	Pending
15	Chitradurga taluk B	KC & KS Villagers	Case of chappal beating	Acc. Lingayat	471. 59-60	Decided
16	Kadur A	MS Villagers	Illegitimate conception	Acc. Lingayat	470. 59-60	Pending
17	Chitradurga J	S & others L	Case of chappal beating	Lingayats	526. 59-60	Decided and intimated that the boycott can be lifted

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
18	Kadur	SB MG	G	Case of chappal beating	Lingayat	642. 59-60	Decided
19	Tarikeri	H R & SL	M	Partition of landed property	Lingayat	644. 59-60	Pending
20	Hassan	K M	R Gauda	Domestic quarrel	Lingayat	692/59-60	Pending
21	Chennagiri	M R	E & T	A case of chappal beating	Lingayat	782-59-60	Notice given to the accused
22	Chikmagalur	H P	Villagers	Immoral conduct	Acc. Lingayat	760. 59-60	Notice given to the party

EXPLANATION OF THE CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT

Before proceeding to analyse the more significant of the cases recorded, it is necessary to explain the different categories under which the cases are listed.

The cases are arranged under ten broad headings, such as marriage, adultery and sexual offences, religious rites and caste practices, anti-social acts, transposition of occupation, pollution, interpretation of Sastras, caste ranking, initiation and personal affairs. Under marriage is included cases of marital alliances within the same lineage, intersect marriages, permissible kin relationship for choice of spouses. One interesting case worth mentioning (Letter No. 3 in VI-3) relates to the question of caste status of a marriage with a Brahman girl brought up by a Sudra family. The husband is a Brahman who met with difficulties in the caste circle consequent on the marriage. The case shows that parentage has perforce to be reinforced by the caste status of the foster parents also in case of children of higher caste brought up by members of a lower caste.

The manner in which the matas give their advice on marriage questions involving regional and local traditions and also the spirit of the times (kula, desa, vartamana) which are not laid down in the Dharma-sastras is brought out clearly in Case No. 20 of VI-3 and Nos. 4 and 7 of VII.

In the category of adultery, sexual offences such as illegitimate conception by widows, illicit sexual relationship by man or woman with a member of the same or a lower caste are treated. Case No. 1 of VI presents an important phenomenon which has been discussed in detail in the same chapter. The advice given by the mata relating to the marriage of her children, however, reveals the responsibility undertaken by the former to ensure proper alliances for the children of the woman in question, thereby safeguarding their rights of membership in the caste. The higher percentage of cases of adultery (30% and 24% approximately) reported to the Vira-saiva matas may be owing to the fact that amongst other factors, the castes seeking redress are drawn mostly from the lower ranks of the caste hierarchy of the region. These castes seem to be less inhibited and do not hesitate to seek remedy. Vira-saiva sect sanctions divorce and widow marriage.

To retain the membership of one's caste, an individual has to perform certain rites and ceremonies to discharge ritual obligations to parents and children. Thus we find that in Case No. 2 of VI-A the agnates (brother) of the Brahman widow's husband who married a

Sudra and thus lost her caste had to perform 'ghata sraddha' which symbolised the death of the woman and thereby her severance from the family and the caste. Such a rite released the performer from the pollution incurred by him through her *pratiloma* marriage and enabled him to discharge his obligation towards his dead relative. Otherwise, he was not considered ritually fit to perform the *sraddha* for his own dead wife. This *sraddha* has also enabled the son of the outcaste woman to live as a full fledged member of his caste.

Under the head of religious rites and caste practices are cases in which advice is sought in regard to the *sraddha* ceremonies for parents whose whereabouts remain unknown for a continuous period of more than fifteen years. Other cases included under this category relate to miscellaneous religious matters such as fixing correct dates for upakarma, *sraddha*, and other religious rites. Both the Sankara matas seem to be concurrent in their opinions on these matters.

The fourth category of cases is anti-social acts. These acts mainly consist of beating with chappals, slander, contempt of the caste panchayats and matas. All the cases listed in this category are from Karnataka region and from members of the lower castes. From the cases included in the category of personal affairs it will be noticed that the Sankara mata, Sringeri, extends its blessings to non-Hindus as well as non-Indians who seek it. The fifteen cases listed by the Taralabala mata relate to matters concerning property. Eleven cases relating to initiation refer to the conferring of Siva-diksha by the Murgharajendra mata (Vira-saiva). By this initiation non-Lingayats are admitted into the fold of Lingayats. Other categories in the statement are self-explanatory.

REMARKS

A study of the various letters on caste questions referred to the matas furnishes an insight into the manner in which the latter exercise their functions. The importance of the Brahman matas of Sringeri* and Kumbakonam lies in the fact that they are the custodians of Dharma-sastras which serve as the principal guide in matters concerning *Varnasrama dharma*. All the Varnas in South India look to these matas for help in interpreting the Sastras and advising them on different problems.

*Weber, Max. The Religion of India. 1959, p. 25. Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois.

"The Brahmins find such authorities in the Castris and Pandits-scholars in sacred law, educated in Brahmanical schools Shringeri (for the South) or Shri Sankaracharya of Sankeshwar (for the North and North West).

It is seen from the copies of letters reproduced that the means by which social control is sought to be exercised consist of punishment of the offender by social isolation (*kattu*), fines (*tanda*), collection of fees (*kanikka*), expiation ceremonies (*prayaschitta*) and in extreme cases by excommunication (*bahishkara*). In no instance, have the religious institutions initiated the procedure leading to any of the penalties mentioned above? Invariably action is taken on complaints received from individuals belonging to the caste and/or the caste panchayats of the localities concerned. Even with regard to complaints from individuals the Sringeri mata referred them to the local panchayat and called for their reports before taking any decision.

A scrutiny of the decisions of the matas shows that they never assumed the role of a prosecutor nor did they seek to enforce 'social sanctions'. Most of the letters sought for and obtained advice as to the appropriate measures that should be adopted with a view to punishing and correcting the offenders. The replies of the matas are in the nature of suggestions and directions which are mostly based on Dharma-sastras. They are respected by the complainants for two reasons, namely, (i) that they emanate from the spiritual head of a religious institution whose principal aim is to maintain the tenets of Hindu *dharma* and (ii) that members of every caste coming within the pale of *Varnasramadharma* unquestioningly acknowledge and respect the competence of the institutions to offer advice on religious matters.

There is yet another reason for the popularity of the matas. Their decisions are seldom harsh nor do they demand extreme penalties of excommunication and the like. They take into account the financial capacity of the offender to discharge the obligations imposed. Fines levied are exceedingly small and are never beyond the means of the persons who have to pay them. The Sringeri mata has in one of the letters to a caste panchayat laid particular emphasis on this point. It is no wonder, therefore, that the several castes of the region willingly submit to the authority of the mata and discharge the obligations imposed on them. To-day most panchayats (and other equivalent organs) make decisions without consulting the *castris* and *pandits*, such consultation being considered optional. Of course, some castes, including the lower ones, still appeal to one or other of the holy seats (monasteries in Sankeshwar or Shringeri)*

It has been pointed out that the matas do not take the initiative in dealing with caste offences. They recognise the authority of the duly constituted local caste panchayats to take the initiative and act as the

*Weber, Max. The Religion of India, 1959, p. 109. Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois.

executive authority, to enforce the rules of the caste and the decisions of the matas. The matas do not exercise any punitive power.* The collection of fines and enforcement of the decisions of the matas are entirely the duties of the panchayats. It is, therefore, the local caste panchayat which virtually carries on the caste government in a local area and exercises a sort of social control over the members of the caste.

The matas seem to be justified in making the panchayats the local ~~guardians~~ of the caste system. It is the latter who are supposed to be conversant with the caste traditions. In more than one letter, the matas, both of Sringeri and Kumbakonam have laid stress on the importance of following the traditions of the caste, locality and region (*kulachara*, *sistachara* and *desachara*) in taking decisions on caste questions. It, therefore, seems that the Brahman religious institutions in South India, whatever might have been their role in the past, now function entirely in an advisory capacity. They lack the political authority to enforce 'social sanctions' which are the means of maintaining effective social control. At the same time, it can be said that they seek to fulfil in a large measure what is called the 'social function' of religion by rendering all possible assistance to several caste groups in South India to maintain social integrity as evidence from the above pages.

It may appear strange that the Saiva matas of Thanjavur do not perform similar functions in respect of the non-Brahman castes of the region. These matas are said to be immensely rich and they confine their activities mostly to the propagation of Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy and the proper maintenance of Siva temples. No non-Brahman caste group seems to offer allegiance to the matas though many individuals, especially of the agricultural castes do pay reverence to the heads of these matas. It may be observed that the institution of caste panchayat is fast disappearing in that district and the few that continue to exist seem to settle their affairs among themselves according to tradition.

The two Vira-saiva matas are found to differ from the Brahman matas in their role. It is due to the fact that they are expected to cater to a comparatively small section of the population, namely, the Lingayats. In fact, the Lingayat matas such as Murgharajendra and Taralabala act as the ultimate authorities on all questions relating to Lingayats. Theocratic authority exercising social control is in reality to be found only in such matas. The tenets of the Vira-saiva sect are simple to follow and are outside the purview of *Varnasramadharm*. The

**Ibid.*, p. 300. "The superiors of the monastery in Shringeri, the mightiest until the present, could through excommunication outlaw any Shivast from the community of believers in the whole of South India."

initiation (giving *Siva Diksha*) of non-Lingayats also acts as an incentive for the lower castes which seek to raise their ritual status in the hierarchy by becoming converts to Vira-saivism. Such a scope is absent in orthodox Hinduism. It may also be mentioned that the Lingayat sect is a great political force in the Karnataka State.

Social reforms introduced by the State find willing co-operation from the authorities of the Lingayat matas as their tenets are in no way affected by them. On the other hand, it adds considerable ~~importance to~~ the institutions both in the political and social ~~areas of~~ participation. They, therefore, find it possible to exercise effective social control over their followers.

PART TWO

HISTORY OF THE SRI VAISHNAVA SWAYAMACHARYA PURUSHA REETA
OF KANAKGIRI—ANEGUNDI SIMHASNA—CASE RECORDS—COMMENTS
ON CASE RECORDS—REMARKS.

I. HISTORY OF THE SRI VAISHNAVA SWAYAMACHARYA PURUSHA PEETA OF KANAKGIRI—ANEGUNDI SIMHASANA—MYSORE STATE

One of the main sources of information regarding the manner and extent of social control existent among many of the castes of ~~Karnataka~~ region is the Sri Vaishnava Swayamacharya Peeta at Kanakgiri in Gangavati Taluk of Raichur district. It is called the Anegundi Simhasana Rajaguru Peeta. The Rajaguru, as the Swayamacharya Purusha of this Peeta is the priest and preceptor to the several non-Brahman castes belonging to Sri Vaishnava Sect, *i.e.*, those who follow the tenets of Sri Ramanuja, the founder of Visishtadwaita Philosophy.

Sri Srinivasa Tholappacharya was the Rajaguru at the time I visited Hospet in 1964. He belongs to a long line of Swayamacharya Purushas who were the Gurus, priests and preceptors of Vijayanagar kings. The records maintained by him from the year 1923 contain much useful information regarding disputes which came to him for settlement from his disciples. The disputes relate to a variety of matters touching on caste discipline and mostly cover castes belonging to the middle and lower ranks of the local caste hierarchy. The records of the Rajaguru are particularly significant in that they illustrate the importance of caste tradition as a great social force, fostered by religious sentiments, as will be explained later.

What is the relation between the Rajaguru Peeta and the castes in question? Why do the latter depend on the Peeta for resolving their disputes and dissensions? What is the nature of the authority vested in the Guru Peeta to try cases involving caste discipline and delinquency? How did he acquire such authority? These are some of the questions the answers to which are fundamental to the proper understanding of the subject matter of the records referred to.

Of the above questions, the last two will be taken up first as they will provide the historical background for the prevailing socio-religious custom under consideration. It must be noted that the region in which the authority of the Rajaguru is acknowledged and respected comprises of the districts of Bellary, Anantapur and Cuddappah, called Rayalaseema, and the districts of Raichur, Bijapur and Dharwar of Mysore State. Bellary, Raichur and Bijapur were the venues of anti-Islamic movement led by the Hoysala kings and

chieftains of Kampili in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In fact, Anegundu, one of the three forts of Kampili Raja was the nucleus round which grew the famous Vijayanagar Empire.

Students of Indian History might be aware that the Empire of Vijayanagar was founded with the avowed object of upholding and preserving orthodox Hinduism against the insurge of Islam in Deccan. S. Krishnaswamy Ayyangar states, 'Coming into existence from out of the ashes of the last powerful southern kingdom, ~~that of the Hoysalas~~, Vijayanagar stood out for all that was worth preserving in Hindu religion and culture. . . . 'the movement was national, a nationalism which was infused through and through with the sentiments of religion', 'the object of Vijayanagar and of those who were responsible for it, were to preserve all that was Hindu, irrespective of the multifarious differences that went to constitute the Hinduism of those days' (Ayyangar : 1942 : 298). In his History of South India, Sastri states, 'the emperors of Vijayanagar addressed themselves deliberately to the task of preserving the Hindu social and political order from being destroyed by Islam, and in this task they were eminently successful in spite of repeated reverses in the field of battle' (Sastri : 1955 : 297).

The impetus which the founders of the Hindu Kingdom of Vijayanagar gained had its beginnings in the earlier kingdom of Kampili under the able rulers Singaya Raja and his famous son Kampili Raja. 'This new kingdom included the present Bellary, Raichur and Dharwar districts and three important forts Kampili, Kummata and Hosadurga (Anegundi) all on the Tungabhadra' (Sastri : 1955 : 223). It was on the southern bank of the Tungabhadra river, opposite to the ancient fortress of Anegundi that the new city of Vijayanagar (city of victory) also called Vidyanagar (city of learning) was founded by the two Sangama brothers, Harihara and Bukka, with the blessings of Sage Madhawa Vidyaranya in the year 1336 A.D.

The first rulers of the Vijayanagar Kingdom were Saivites, their tutelary deity being Sri Virupaksha. Sage Madhawa Vidyaranya was a pontiff of the Advaita Mata at Sringeri. Hence the kings of Vijayanagar held the Pontiffs of Sringeri Mata in great veneration and made several grants to the Mata. Towards the close of the fifteenth century probably during the reign of the last of the Sangama rulers, a change seems to have occurred in the religious creed of the sovereign. Rev. Father Heras has quoted at length a story of how the king Virupaksha of the Sangama dynasty was converted into Sri Vaishnava faith (Heras : 1927 : 540). The story is blended with a legendary

account taken from a Vaishnavaita work named *Prapannamrutam* and quoted extensively by Krishnasvamy Aiyangar. But it is a historical fact that by the end of the fifteenth century and just before Saluva Narasimha, minister to the last Sangama rulers, usurped the throne in 1485 A.D., a change had come over in the faith of the rulers of Vijayanagar. According to *Prapannamrutam* referred to above, two Vaishnava Brahmans, Narasimhacharya and his brother who belonged to the village of Etoor and who represented themselves as the descendants of Sri Sailapurna, the maternal uncle of Sri Ramanuja visited the palace of the king. A legend about Sri Sailapurna is that God Sri Venkateswara of Triupati appeared before him and called him 'tata' meaning 'grandfather'. His descendants who became Swayamacharya Purushas are referred to as tatacharyas.

The present Rajaguru of Kanakgiri-Anegundi Simhasana Rajaguru Peeta is said to be a descendant of the Etoor family of tatacharyas. Long before the time of the Vijayanagar kings, Srivaishnava creed had made a headway into the Hoysala territories. Sri Ramanuja (1017-1137 A.D.) is said to have lived in Melukota (Mysore) for 12 years preaching his new creed and converting people to Srivaishnava faith. His disciples spread it far and wide in South India. Of the many centres established by them, three were in Karnataka, viz., Chitradurga, Hosadurga and Bagur where Swayamacharya Purushas (Tatacharyas) remained and became the priests and preceptors of many chieftains and kings (Rajaguru's written statement).

The earliest reference to a Tatacharya in the Vijayanagar History is in connection with the settlement of a religious dispute between the Jains and Srivaishnava Brahmans, apparently in Mysore, by Bukka Raya I 1368 A.D. Among other things the royal decree says, 'Tatayya of Tirumala (Tirupati) by the consent of the blessed people of the whole kingdom will, out of the money levied at the rate of one anna a year for every house according to the door from the Jains throughout the whole kingdom for the bodyguard to be appointed by Vaishnavas at the holy place Belugola (Sravana Belgola) appoint twenty servants as bodyguard for the God, and with the remainder of the money have the dilapidated jinalayas (the Jain temples) white washed'. It is evident from this that there was a Tatacharya (Swayamacharya Purusha) in the neighbourhood of Sravana Belgola probably in charge of the famous Vaishnava temple at Melkote (Heras, 1927 : Vol. I : 538 & 539).

The Saluva dynasty lasted from 1485 to 1509 A.D. after which the Tuluva dynasty succeeded to the throne of Vijayanagar Srivaishnavism gained a large number of adherents during the time of Tuluva
1 ASI/68—8

rulers, Krishna Deva Raya, Achyuta Raya and Sadasiva. It is said that the rulers of Vijayanagar not only granted lands and high birudus to persons of distinction but gave them certain coveted privileges and insignia of honour... The famous dictator Venkata Tataraya (Tatacharya)—Krishna Deva Raya the Great invested with uncommon religious powers in 1522-1523—privileges to get the first honours in the assemblies of Srivaishnavas, and authorized to make enquiries into the conduct of all castes owing allegiance to Ramanuja and to punish the delinquents in regard to religious and social matters (Salatore : 1934 : Vol. II : 266). It is said that this Tatacharya was of the Satamaishana Gotra, which is the Gotra of the present Rajaguru. (Mahalingam : 1940 : 324).

A copy of the copper-plate grant furnished by the Raja Sri Krishna Deva Raya of Anegundi shows the village of Udamakallu was granted to Srinivasacharya, son of Tholappacharya and grandson of Etoor Tatacharya by Aravidu Ramabhadra Raya's grandson, Ranga Raya's son, Ramadeva Maharaya. Though the Tuluva dynasty was ruling during this period, the Aravidu chiefs were ministers and rulers of provinces and were issuing charters in their own name which were considered as royal decrees.

From the time of Krishna Deva Raya (1509-1529), the Tatacharyas of Etoor family seem to have been the Royal Priests in Vijayanagara. Etoor Tatacharya, the author of Panchamata Bhanjanam, was the Guru during the reign of Sadasiva and the *de facto* ruler Rama Raya of the Aravidu dynasty (1542-1565 A.D.). Again, we hear the mention of Etoor Kumara Tirumala Tatacharya during the reign of Sri Ranga Raya I (1572-1586). According to a copper-plate grant dated 1589 Venkatapathi Deva (Venkata II) is said to have been anointed to the throne by Tatacharya, the Guru of his own gotra (Salatore : 1934 : Vol. II : 222).

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F.N. Rev. Heras in his book entitled 'Aravidu Dynasty of Vijayanagar' says, 'While speaking of the coronation (1585) of Venkata we have seen that the Pattabhishekam ceremony had been performed by his family Guru Tatacharya or Tataraya. . . He (Tatacharya) was according to Prapannamrutam, a descendant of the maternal uncle of the great reformer Ramanuja; and two of his ancestors had been the cause of the conversion of the Emperor Virupaksha to Vaishnavism. He was the son of Panchamata bhanjanam Tatacharya according to the same poem, but a copper-plate grant of 1590 A.D. in the Government Museum, Madras, states that he was the grandson of Etoor

Tatacharya, and son of Srinivasa. He is mentioned in an inscription of Ranga I along with the temple officer Tiruppu Kula. Again, the Prapannamrutam informs us the Venkata became a disciple of the Srivaishnava teacher Lakshmi Kumara Tatacharya, this being his full name.' (1927 : Vol. I, 304-5).

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From the time of Krishna Deva Raya, the Etoor family of Swayamacharya Parashas called Tatacharyas, continued to be the Royal priests and also the Gurus of the several non-brahman castes professing Ramanuja faith (Srivaishnavism) in the Rayalaseema. The authority of these Tatacharyas in matters relating to caste dissensions was, as shown already, recognised as early as 1368 A.D. Krishna Deva Raya granted the Tatacharya of his period the power to enquire into caste transgressions and to punish the delinquents. The authority seems to have continued during the successive reigns of the Vijayanagar kings and has come down to the present day as an established custom.

A sample of the Sannads (deeds issued by rulers) in the possession of the Rajaguru shows that members of this line of Gurus have been the preceptors of the chieftains of Kanakgiri as well as Anegundi and enjoyed the privilege of supervising the conduct of the followers of Ramanuja matha (called Namadaris in local parlance). The other religious sects referred to them as Namadari Gurus. The Empire and the chieftains from whom these Acharyas derived their authority have vanished; yet the tradition is kept alive as a social necessity. Strangely enough, the spatial jurisdiction of the authority of the Rajaguru corresponds to the territory once under the Kampili Rayas. Though his authority has its roots in the social setup of the fourteenth century, his decisions, self-evident from the records are pre-eminently modern. He represents a vital link in the life of the villagers of this region; a link that forges the dynamic present with the historic past through the media of traditional customs and conventions. It is a continuum.

The records that are reproduced in the following pages bear sufficient testimony to the trust and reverence that his disciples have in his judgments and the deep sense of justice and fairness with which he discharges the great responsibility vested in him. The castes that seek his interference and advice, by tradition and circumstances, mostly belong to the peasant class. A perusal of the written statements and representations of the parties concerned in the disputes settled by the Rajaguru, shows that in a large majority of cases, they were illiterate and not even capable of signing their own names. To such people, the traditional ways of behaviour and caste custom are much more easily comprehensible than the laws of the State.

The Rajaguru is regarded by these castes as the custodian of the traditional code of conduct pertaining to each caste group and an exponent of the Dharma Sastra. He is an institution by himself like the Guru Peetas of South India and a symbol of the social order among the Namadari groups which owe allegiance and pay homage to him. As will be seen from the records reproduced, the caste people look to him as the ultimate authority whose decision is regarded as final. Each caste has its own Panchayat which acts as the local authority in social matters and in cases involving moral discipline they seem to realize that the authority of a learned religious preceptor is necessary to keep the individual castes from disintegration and mixing up.

The present Rajaguru maintains a complete record of cases referred to him by individuals, caste councils and others, dating from 1923 A.D. It was almost an impossible task to have the innumerable documents, which are in Kannada and Telugu, transcribed. At my request, he selected fortyfive and gave me such of the cases as were in a broad sense representative of the type of disputes referred to him. The order in which the cases are arranged in this report is based on the date on record.

II CASTE COUNCILS—THEIR COMPOSITION AND FUNCTION

The minimal unit for the arbitration of disputes relating to caste is the caste council (*jati kattu*). The word 'caste' is used here to include the groups of sub-castes each of which takes a common denomination, regards itself as a separate group into a specific status in the local hierarchy of caste and is regarded as such by the members of other caste groups in the region. In the area under investigation, the traditionally established Court for discharging social justice is formed exclusively by the members of the same caste and is called *jati kattu* (*jati* meaning a caste). The members of the council are called *jati* or *kula mukhyastaru*. By convention, membership in a caste council is not hereditary. Generally, persons of high integrity and unbaised minds are elected as *jati Mukhyastaru*. However, a tendency for the more prosperous members of the caste to make their way into these caste councils is perceptible.

The caste council is called a *kattemane*. 'Katte' means a raised platform. It is generally built round a shady tree. Until recent times, the members of the caste council used to take their seat on these platforms to hear and judge the disputes. In almost all the villages of Rayalaseema, Andhra and Tamilnad such platforms are to be found in the village common. The Rajaguru told me that about 30 years

ago members of the ruling family of Anegundi and a few other prominent villagers used to sit day after day in the village 'katte', listening to and passing judgment over disputes that were brought to them for settlement. These platforms were also called *rachcha bhandu* (*rachcha*=quarrel; dispute, *bhandu*=stone). Of course these were informal councils and not related to any particular caste. They were empowered by tradition to settle any dispute arising in the village (such informal courts are found functioning in remote parts of Europe, e.g., Valencia's Tribunal of Waters in Spain). By dint of long usage, these katemanes have acquired sanctity and infused solemnity in the minds of villagers who came to regard them as seats of justice.

The traditional katemane consists of five or seven members. In the region studied, it was invariably five. The office bearers are the Yajamana (meaning the head or leader), Budhivanta (meaning the wise) Kondikara, the errand boy and two other kula mukhyastru. Each katemane has its own office bearers. In almost all cases, the authority of the katemane is spatially circumscribed. It is generally one revenue firka comprising of thirtythree villages and hamlets approximately. In cases needing the decision of more than one katemane, a larger council formed by the Yajamanas and Buddhivantas is constituted. It is known as Desa or Nadu and the president is called Desa Vari or Nadu. At present, the institution of Desa Vari is almost extinct. In the complaints received by the Rajaguru the term 'daivachara' occurs frequently. 'Daivachara' denotes the caste council. 'Daiva' means a council of a caste or a sub-caste which is involved in the plaint and daivachara, the rules or conventions adopted by the 'daiva' on questions of caste and caste conduct.

The 'kondikara' is the one official who is paid for his services. It is his duty to distribute the notice of meetings of the caste council, serve the 'bahishkara patrika' (excommunication notice) and communicate the grant of 'suddha patrika' (purification notice) to the parties concerned and also to the members of the same caste residing in the several villages constituting the katemane. The fees for the 'kondikara' is defrayed from the guarantee money paid by the parties or complainant when a case is instituted before the caste council. The customary amount is one rupee and four annas, out of which two annas is set aside as the fee of the 'kondikara'.

In a caste council, the Yajamana holds a highly responsible and respected position. In one of his judgments the Rajaguru has explained the duties and functions of a Yajamana in a caste council. On every socio-religious occasion, the Yajamana receives the *vilayam* betel leaves and areca-nuts presented by the parties as a mark of honour

next to the guru. His presence is necessary for the solemnization of all contracts except the legal ones. His formal permission has to be obtained by parties negotiating a marriage contract. So also, when they decide to break a marriage contract. It is he who can decide, allot and accept persons into the caste group or outside it with the approval of the members of the council.

The Yajamana acts as the intermediary between the guru and the kattermane. He is the executive head of the caste council who guides and directs the secular affairs of the kattermane with the authority delegated to him by the guru. In many places where the authority of the guru has waned completely, the Yajamana wields his authority in his capacity as the chief man elected by the members of his caste to preside over the affairs of his caste men. He is empowered by convention and convenience to decide issues involving caste conventions and practices. He also executes the orders and decrees issued by the guru on matters of social and religious importance. On the religious side, the Yajamana is supposed to be assisted by the Samaya-chara, who is a representative of the guru and the Purushakara who is the authorized religious functionary for the group. These two officials are not, however, found to be functioning in all villages and in all castes. Many of the castes which cannot afford to maintain them manage their religious affairs with the help of the Yajamana and other members of the caste. Some castes such as the Holeys (called Jambavas and untouchables) are by custom, outside the pale of the services of higher caste religious officials. These have evolved a custom by which one of the castes ranking immediately above them, officiates as priests in their religious function, for example, the Madigas (cobblers and untouchables) have the Gollas (shepherds and cowherds) as their priests. On the social side, the members of the kattermane assist them in maintaining social order in accordance with the group conventions.

The institution of 'kattermane' and what it stands for is explained in the best manner by the Rajaguru himself in one of his decisions. A translation of the decision is furnished below. (Decision given in the matter of the dispute regarding the kattermane of Jambava kula in jagir of Koppala in Nizam's dominions).

There are three important points at issue to be investigated :

- (i) What is a kattermane ?
- (ii) To which place belongs the authority of a-kattermane ?
- (iii) Who are the rightful owners of the kattermane ?

These three points are decided on the basis of the documents furnished.

"The dispute started a long time ago. The causes pertaining to this affair were not dealt with in the proper way and had been taken up after long intervals. There was, therefore, needless waste of time. Each party was simply carrying on the complaint saying that the honours (mariyada) were due to them. They did not care to pay attention and find out who are the rightful owners of the kattermane, who should be given the honours (due to the kattermane) who has the authority to determine these points. It has to be stated that those matters were no given consideration to the parties to the disputes or by the Government. •

"Courts of Justice run by the Government have the authority of the King. There are Acts to protect the property of the people. They are of three kinds, namely, Civil, Criminal and Revenue. One is for dealing with movable and immovable property. The second is for the protection of the life of the subjects, and the third is for running the Government. These are concerned with temporal affairs (this worldly). Similarly, the tenets of Dharma are concerned with the elevation of humanity. They are of three kinds. One of them is intended to dispel ignorance and bestow enlightenment. The second is for prescribing the method of Dharma relating to Prayaschitta (expiation ceremony), etc.; the third relates to the methods pertaining to Sishyas (disciples). The institution of Guru exists for the safeguarding of Dharma Sasana, which is the foundation for the three kinds expressed above. Kattermane is related to caste and creed and, therefore, falls within the purview of Dharma Sasana. It is this Simhasanam which holds the position of Guru (Samayacharya Guruthva hakku), and, therefore, the power to enquire and decide issues relating to the affairs of the kattermane which is concerned with caste and creed.

I. It is clear that a kattermane is related to a specific area. Kattermane is the source for caste rules. In every region, one village will be the central place for the location of the kattermane. It derives its authority from the people belonging to the respective castes. It attends to the welfare (grievances, etc.) of the community by punishing offenders and by doing so tends to unite the members of the caste. Therefore, it is established that a kattermane is associated with a specific place (not changeable)."

Such was and partly is the composition and function of a kattermane in Kannada speaking areas. It serves as the original Court of Justice and its decisions are rarely challenged by the villagers. The records of disputes referred to and decided by the Rajaguru, however, bear testimony to the fact that individuals have occasionally appealed to

the Rajaguru against the decisions of the kattermane. His decisions which are passed after hearing all the parties concerned are accepted as final. There are instances where cases which were first referred to a Court of Law for decision were subsequently withdrawn to be decided by the Rajaguru. These councils which are in the nature of self-governing bodies and blessed with the authority of a Religious Institution, contribute largely to the stability and unity of the several castes in the villages of the region. As already stated, the English rendering of the several disputes and the decisions explains clearly the wide range of matters over which the decision of the Rajaguru was sought by his disciples.

The next chapter consists mainly of the English rendering of the selected cases from the records in Kannada language.

III ENGLISH RENDERING OF THIRTY CASE RECORDS FURNISHED BY THE RAJAGURU OF KANAKGIRI—ANEGUNDI SIMHASANA

Record No. 1

To

The Sannidhanam of Sri Srinivasa Tholappacharya

The letter of 16-9-1923 from Dombara T. and Dombara T. of Yeraballi village of Thavadur Magera of Harapanahalli Taluk.

(1) There were disputes from time to time between us and Yeraballi Daivamvara and others settled them in panchayat as follows :

That the *bidiki* fees to be paid by us to the Daivamvaru should be handed over to the custody of the panchayat and it was agreed by Doddamane S., M. and others that the amount would be paid within 8 days for which time was granted.

That day S. and others did not approve the idea of paying the amount to the Panchayat but deposited it with the Sowcar. For not keeping up the word, the latter (the panchayat) found fault with us and saying that they have also got authority like the Guru, they are getting a petition signed by the village Daivamvaru. This should be enquired into.

We pray that you should make enquiries and give your decision in the matter of the petition prepared by the village Daivamvaru and cancel it.

September 16, 1923

His son L. of Yeraballi, Dombara, writes to the Guru stating that since the Sahukar (Sowcar) was giving trouble and that he got time for 15 days and sent the documents to the Guru who did not return it in time. He prays that it may be returned per bearer.

(1) Dombara A. writes to say that the false complaint made by S. in regard to H. should be enquired into and the persons who ill advised her should be proceeded against. It should be clearly brought out that there is complaint against S.

(2) The letter written by Kyarakatti S. Gomala : When the enquiry was made, the girl H kept quiet. She was in the house of M. That evening she went and told the Police complaining against S's son, Sanna T. R. and Sanna H. The reason for it is, as I believe that she was forced to give the statement (to the police) by M. The girl was in the house of M.

(3) D's son was away from his native place for the past 30 to 40 years. Attempts are being made to admit him in the community.

(4) S, wife of B. eloped with a Kuruba fellow. For this, purificatory rites according to caste custom were performed and a sum of Rs. 24 (Rs. 12 for prayaschitta and Rs. 12 for fine) was recovered by the kattermane people 3 or 4 years ago.

This enquiry is conducted in this Sannidhanam on the complaint made in regard to the disputes which existed between Yeraballi S. and A. from time to time and which grew into mutual enmity.

Plaintiff—A

Respondent—S

The Respondent is said to have stood surety for the amount required by the Plaintiff in a criminal case. It was not paid. The plaintiff said that it would be referred to the caste panchayat. Words were exchanged between the parties. The plaintiff had excommunication notice served on the Respondent for the latter not responding to the call of the caste Daivachara of Kenchapura. It is the fault of the Respondent to have failed to abide by the decision of Kenchapuram Daiyamvaru.

It is the fault of the Plaintiff to have communicated the excommunication notice to us.

It is the fault of H. advised by M. to have caused monetary loss to the Respondent by giving a statement in the criminal case. The

Respondent should see that the Plaintiff is paid the amount that is lawfully due and the Plaintiff on his part should see that the loss to Respondent is made good by the persons responsible for it. This will be in accord with the caste custom. This is the decision. •

Rudhirodgari
Aswija Bahula 2
Kamalpur.

(Sd.) Shri Tholappacharya.

* * * * *

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

In the Sannidhanam of Sri Guru.

Muchalika of S. T, son of S, Reddi Dembara caste of Yeraballi village, Thavadur, Harapanahalli Taluk.

In our village, C died about four years ago. His wife lived in her father-in-law's house even after the husband's death. She had connection with D and became pregnant. She gave birth to a child seven or eight months ago. It was a serious wrong committed in our house which was formerly a Kattemane and it resulted in the loss of our authority of Kattemane. The widow, the person who had connection with her and the Kattemane people have become guilty of this great fault. We can prove the offence and we are prepared to be present at your enquiry with witnesses for the purpose. If I fail to do so, I am prepared to pay a fine of Rs. 100 for bringing a false complaint. If I fail to be present at the time of enquiry fixed by you, I shall pay Rs. 25 as fine. I shall bind myself to carry out your orders. The fines of Rs. 100 and Rs. 25 mentioned above you are empowered to recover from me or my heirs.

Rudhiradgari-Bhadrapada 4
Camp, Kamalapur

S T, son of S

The Muchalika submitted by A. T. and Sanna H.

We have said several times that the amount to be paid by us to S. may be recovered after making due enquiries and determining the fault of the respective persons. This was not done but the Plaintiff is intent only on the recovery of the money and without intimating your Sannidhanam and without your authority, he has instituted these proceedings according to caste custom. Therefore, we are prepared to be present at your Sannidhanam at the time, date and place fixed by you for enquiry and decision. If we fail to be present, we shall pay a fine of Rs. 25. Besides, we shall carry out your orders (present and future). After the enquiry, in case, we have to pay

fine or in the event of our not attending the enquiry, these fines, you are empowered to recover from us or from our heirs.

Rudhirudgari—Bhadrapada 24

(Sd) T.

Camp—Kamalapur

2 L.T. impressions

* * * *

S's Muchalika

I stood guarantee for the payment of Rs. 200 to A and G for which they gave a promisory note but failed to pay the amount with interest on due date. So I took proceedings against them according to the caste custom. While it is so, they took action against me. My statement is as follows : That I shall be present for the enquiry on the date, time and place fixed by you and get the case settled. If I am found to be guilty, I am prepared to pay a fine of Rs. 50 and I shall pay a fine of Rs. 25, if I fail to be present at the enquiry. I shall also bind myself to carry out the orders that you may pass. You are empowered to recover the fines, if any, payable by me from me or my heirs.

Camp—Kamalapur

(Sd) L's son alias S

L.T. impressions of two witnesses.

Notice issued from Sri Guru Sannidhanam.

The case between you (Plaintiff and Respondent) will be heard as per your request and according to the caste custom on Aswija Pournima of this year. This notice is issued to S, A, T and Sanna T of Dombara caste of Yeraballi village of Harapanahalli. You should be present with your witnesses and evidence at Kamalapur, Hospet Taluk.

We have had the notice read out to us and shall be present at the enquiry.

(Sd) S

L.T. impression of T

L.T. impression of A

(Sd) T

* * * *

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

In the Sannidhanam of Guru.

The muchalika submitted by M, daughter of V of Dombara caste of Yeraballi village of Harapanahalli (on the day of enquiry, i.e., Pournima of Aswija).

I have been accused of having misled the girl, H and made her to give statement against Sannappa, Ayyappa and others of our village

in a criminal case. In that matter I submit that I did not give any kind of bad advice to that girl and that if an enquiry is held, I shall be present at the time and place fixed by your and prove my innocence. I shall pay the usual fee for the enquiry.

* * * * *

To the Guru's Sannidhanam

The petition submitted by the people of Kenchapura of Chatrahalli and Yeraballi village of Thavadur is as follows :

(1) A H of Yeraballi and Dombara K's wife went together 4 or 5 months ago and there is no trace of them. K's wife was living in Dombara M's mother's house since her husband's death (before her disappearance with H).

15, 20 days ago, it was learnt that they were living together in Mavunahalli of Kudhgi Taluk. H and H are in the relation of mother and son. We pray that the authority to ostracize them from our caste on account of the immoral conduct should be granted to the caste Kattemane and Daivachara.

(2) On 8-7-24, H and Kondikara H are said to have gone to your Sannidhanam and brought a document in regard to their grievances. We believe that it might not be from Guru. In the Anjaneya temple of our village we took those papers. We did not believe the reply. So, we request that the matter may be enquired into by the Guru himself.

(Sd) Kattemane T & two others.

* * * * *

The letter submitted by the undersigned (Sanna T and T and another) dated 30-5-1924).

6 or 7 months ago, there were several enquiries regarding the affairs of D S and others in your Sannidhanam. Of these, the case of M's (Dombara) readmission into the caste was one.

In that matter, you stated that if we make the representation, we can do the diksha, etc. (rites of purification), now itself on payment of Guru's fees.

Subsequently, after 15 or 20 days, four elders assembled at the Anjaneya temple and held Panchayat. D S Y and others declared that they will surely readmit M into the caste. We said that it should be done as per the orders of the Guru and not otherwise.

S Y and others spoke slighting the authority of the Guru and were prepared for the consequences. They carried out their wishes

(admitting M into caste). We bring this to your notice and pray that notice should be sent to both the parties and they should be punished after the enquiry.

(Sd) S T

D T

30-5-1924

* * * * *

Mahazar petition submitted by the Kattemane and Daivamvaru of Dombara caste of a number of villages of Harapanahalli Taluk asking for permission to amalgamate one of their groups which returned after migrating to other places. The mahazar traces for 40 years the family history of several families which dispersed. It says that four of the family groups which so returned after some time have been assimilated and requests permission to assimilate the fifth family group.

In a supplementary note it prays for orders to take into the caste one of their castemen who married outside their caste and states that there are many precedents for it.

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Record No. 2 (concerns L. of Valmiki caste who was accused of adultery resulting in conception. The petition was filed by the husband and the decision thereon is reproduced below).

**Judgement of Sri Rajaguru in the case of L vs V—Sirigeri
Bellary District—Valmiki caste**

1 In the matter of the conception resulting from the union of men and women, others cannot determine which particular man was responsible for it.

2 L's statement shows that it was caused by V. But there is no other satisfactory evidence to prove its veracity. It is not, therefore, possible to assert that it was caused by him (V).

3 Granting that it (pregnancy) was caused by V, he happens to be the fraternal cousin (Anna-thamma) of her husband. So (their) caste custom will not permit the marriage between him and L.

4 There is no need at present to consider the question whether on account of the pregnancy, the caste traditions will be infringed if she is not attached to some man now alone. Because, in this caste group, there is the custom of remarriage of widows who conceive during widowhood by making the person responsible for it or any other person marrying her (udiki). She is not to be cut off from the caste

group. But the present case is different. She is not a widow conceiving nor can it be said that she is a divorcee (*bidiki*). At the time of the conception she was not '*bidiki*' (divorcee). It may be argued that the conception was the result of adultery. There are instances of married women committing adultery (in secrecy) and conceiving as a result thereof, and nobody will know of it. In this case the pregnancy occurred during the time she was wearing the '*tali*' of her husband. He removed the '*tali*' about two months ago while the pregnancy which commenced five or six months ago will not be affected by it. For instance, a woman conceives when the husband is alive and his subsequent death does not affect the child to be born (posthumously). In the same manner, since the conception took place before the divorce, nobody can raise any objection regarding it. However, the husband's people may be concerned about the inheritance of the property. This question is solved by the statement given in our *Sannidhanam* by L, who declared that the conception was caused by V—not the husband. The only question then is whether her pregnancy affects the Kula custom (caste code) or not. We decide that it does not. Both the husband and the wife have submitted their statements to us, according to which they ceased to have any claim on each other, including the child in the womb. Just as the property of the heirless goes to the Government, *the illegitimate child* (*bevarsu*) *will belong to the Gurumata*, for which there can be no objection. Above all these, it is important to note that her pregnancy is free from sin, that she may be permitted to stay in anybody's house to have the child delivered, that after confinement the *Daivamvaru* and the *Kattemanavaru* and others shall have no objection to give her in marriage (*udiki*) if anyone offers to marry her. This is made known by this present decision. Nobody can have any kind of objection to it. It should be noted that any objections or talk against this will entail serious consequences.

The husband, P and wife K have broken their union effectively, with the return of the '*tali*' (marriage symbol) in our *Sannidhanam*. Therefore, if at any future date, either of them has recourse to legal action under evil advice, it will have no effect and will be vain. Thus is the *Srimukha* written and accorded by us.

(Sd) Sri Tholappacharya

Rudhirodhari—Sravana-Bahula 12.

Camp Sirigeri

Nov. 1923

Record No. 3

In this Guru's Sannidhanam

The Muchalika submitted by H, son of A D of Dombara Kula of Yeraballi village of Harapandballi Taluk.

For nearly one year I had been leading a bad life with (sexual) contact with H and was away from the village. I was cut off from my caste on account of this transgression of caste code. Katteman S says that I should shave my head and moustache and that she should shave her head before readmitting us into the caste. I consider it as improper and I am submitting my statement to you. I shall never have any connections with her in future. I shall regard her as my mother. I pray that I may be purified by prescribing the prayaschitta. I shall carry out your orders and I pray that I may be given the Suddha Patrika and I shall give feast and betel leaves to my caste people.

L.T. impression of H

Akshaya—Margasira

Suddha—15

Mokkam—Hospet

In the Sannidhanam of the Guru

The Muchalika submitted by A D's son, H.

I have decided to pay the Sambhavana of Rs. 44 payable to you and I have given that assurance in the presence of Ayyanalli K and Kavalalli S. I shall proceed to Kottur to-day for securing the money and shall return by 12 o'clock train on Wednesday, Margasira Bahula three and hand over the money to your Samayachar and receive the Srimukha. If I fail to do so, I shall bind myself to pay double that amount. Till then, my case should not be disposed of.

L. T. impression of H

Akshaya—Margasira

Suddha—15

Hospet

Year—Akshaya—Margasira—Suddha—15

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

From Sriman Annegundi Kanakgeri Rajaguru Sannidhi—Srimukham issued to the Katteman, Daivachara and Desabhaga committee of Dombara caste—residing in Yeraballi village of Harapandballi Taluk.

A D's son H had been living outside the village for about a year with H. He has now repented it and has given a written assurance that he will not have any connection with her but will regard her as his mother. On this assurance, he and the woman were asked to undergo prayaschitta as prescribed in Sudra Kamalakara Grantha and they were given mudra dharana. According to the Grantha referred to above, she has to be given panchagavya (mixture of cow's urine, cowdung, ghee, milk and curd) to get rid of the sin. So it (panchagavya) should be given to the kattermane (authority). Thereafter, according to your caste convention, they should be allowed to participate in communal feast and distribution of betel leaves and nuts (Veelyam) and then move in the family (and caste) equally (without any social discrimination).

(Sd) Sri Tholappacharya

Letter to S Dombara Kattermane of Yeraballi village.

It is learnt that you have asked him (H) to have his head and moustache shaved and asked her to have her head shaved. It is not known what people were doing in ancient times. But it is not proper to do it in the present times. Moreover, these (penalties) are not mentioned in the Sri Grantha which is the authoritative text (for such things). You said that it is done among the Kshatriya, Upper Golla and Setti Banijira communities. It is not correct. Barring these, we have prescribed prayaschitta to them on the authority of Dharma-sastra. According to our Srimukham they should be brought into the caste discipline. Failure to do so will be regarded as contempt of our orders. It will give opportunities to the opposite. Hence, it should be carried out without any delay.

(Sd) Sri Tholappacharya

*Akshaya—Margasira

Suddha 15

*The year Akshaya corresponds to 1926 A.D.

Record No. 4

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

To

The Sannidhanam of Sri Guru.

The petition of S, son of A of Mava Halakoti.

I have been keeping M, wife of V L Meti of Meenigula for the past 6-7 years in my house. By me, she has one male and one female child. The female child E is aged 4 years. The name of

the male child is H and his age is two years. She is now carrying for 7 months. I pray that it should be decided that she and her children should be mine or should be handed over to her husband. I shall be present on the date fixed by you (for hearing) and shall substantiate the above facts. Therefore, I shall obtain your decision. If I fail to do so, I shall submit to any punishment that you may impose.

Year Shukla—Vaisakha—Bahula, 10
Wednesday

L.T. impression of Sedalhappa

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

In the Sannidhanam of Sri Guru.

The statement furnished by V. son of A of Tekkalakota village

My brother (younger) S has kept a woman who has a husband and has produced children. We abide by your decision that they should not live in one house and that nobody should mix with them and have food with them. We shall continue to be so until a decision is made by you. If we fail to do so we shall submit to the punishment meted by you.

L. T. impression of V

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna.

To Sri Guru's Sannidhi.

The much chalika presented by S, son of A of A.

Day before yesterday you have issued orders excommunicating me for living with M and for having produced children by her without making arrangements for marrying her in the Udiki form. If I am pardoned and suddha patrika issued, I shall call the Yajamana and paying him the customary respects, shall marry her (udiki). Towards this, I have paid Rs. 45 as release fee (viduthala sulkam). With regard to the children, I shall take necessary steps when the question arises.

L. T. impression of S

The muchachalika written and submitted by the Kattemane Daiva-chara Desabhaga.

We agree to your decision in the matter of S son of A of Halakoti and M arrived at in your Sannidhanam after enquiry. The decisions are that after paying Release fee (viduthala sulkam) she should be

married to him and that the case of the children may be decided when the question arises. We agree to these decisions and shall take further action accordingly.

Nine L.T. impressions and two signatures

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna.

Sri Swami—Camp. Tekkalakota

Year—Shukla, Vaisakha—Bahula 3, Friday

The order (advice) issued to S, son of A, our dear disciple.

S lived with a woman who had a husband. He produced two children by her. Her husband, S S, has given a statement to the Kattemane Daivachara that he does not want her. It is decided with the consent of the Kattemane Daivachara that the case of the children may be taken up at a future date and that he should marry (udiki) M with due honours.

(Sd) Sri Tholappacharya

7-6-1929

Record No. 5

In the Sannidhanam of Sri Guruswami

Mokkam (Camp) Tekkalakota

In the year of Shukla—Vaisakha Shuddha—13. Tuesday.

The statement of S, son of A K Y of Valmiki caste.

I am about 45 years of age. I married thrice. The first wife is the daughter of Y A and her name is K. She has a son by name M, aged about 12 years. I had udiki marriage (widow remarriage) with M of Balgundi. She had one daughter. She is 18 years. Her name is H. She was born to the first husband (of M) in Balgundi. She was not born of my union. Subsequently, there were two children for M. Their age is 8 and 5 years. Their names are H and K. It is ten years since I married the widow of Balgundi. It is now about one year since she died. Thereafter, I married the widow of M of Mavina Madugu. I married two years after M, her husband, died. Till then, she was living with her parents. There is a boy born to her husband. His age is 6. Her husband died 4 years ago. She has no issues by me. This my statement I give on oath.

L.T. impression of Katigara Siddhaligiah

Statement of A, son of K of Devaramad Badigandla

My age is 45. M of Mavina Madugu village is my brother. It is six years since my brother died. His wife, E, while her husband was alive, was living in the house of Tekkalakota. She was there since she attained puberty. She did not come even on the occasion of her husband's death. S married her two years after her husband died. The child born to her is not by her husband. She did not lead the conjugal life with her husband. Since she was living in the house of S, that child was born to him. This is my statement under oath.

L.T. impression of Badigandla A

I have determined that the boy of Devarameti, Mavanameti and Naduvalameti was not S's. The charge was that the boy was born when the woman was living with S before the latter married her. The matter is adjourned to Vaisakha Bahula, 4, Monday.

(Sd) Sri Tholappacharya

The notice sent by Bhoga Setti and others of Mavina Madugu to the (Rajaguru) Anegundi Peetadhipati.

In the matter of V, the husband died within two months of their stay as husband and wife in our village. Thereafter, she (V) went to Tekkalakota for her livelihood and lived with 'S. The boy has become the heir to the property of M. You need not give any consideration to this matter. What they did was against Dharma. Injustice should not be done. We have informed you of all the facts.

'Muchchalika' (document) written by the Kattemane, Devachara and Desabhaga of Valmikikula of Tekkalakota village, to the Rajaguru :

H, son of V, third wife of S of Tekkalakota village, was born when her husband was alive. It is, therefore, established that he belongs to the lineage of his brother. We are all ready to declare it so.

Dated—year Shukla—Vaisakha, Bahula 7, Friday.

(The left thumb impression of 9 persons are affixed to the document).

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

Camp. Tekkalakota

In the year of Shukla—Vaisakha—12, Tuesday

Investigation was made into the dispute whether H, son of V, the third wife of S, son of A K Y was the son of her (V) first husband or not. The statement of A connected with that husband was not proved. So with the consent of Kattemane it is established that since the boy was born when the husband was alive, he was born to him. Heretofore, it is hereby confirmed that the boy is of Devarameti and no other.

Srimukha.

(Sd) Sri Tholappacharya
4-6-1929

Record No. 6

The document contains the solemn undertaking given by the representatives of the Valmiki caste of Bellary on their behalf and on behalf of the Valmiki groups living in 33 villages comprised in Bellary, dated 17th September, 1929 (Prabhava, Bhadrpada Bahula Saptami, Saturday). According to this agreement their caste groups acknowledge the authority of the Rajaguru Sri Srinivasa Tholappacharya in dealing with their caste questions and undertake to punish the offenders and levy fines which the office bearers would collect and remit a portion to the Rajaguru. This document purports to be a revival and re-affirmation of similar contracts that had existed previously and entered into by their forefathers with this religious institution. It is an organized body consisting of president, vice-president, secretaries and others. The document mentions the name of the Secretary nominated by the Rajaguru to carry out investigations in all matters relating to their caste and also furnishes details of the apportionment of fines collected. A noteworthy feature is that a portion of the fines is earmarked for the welfare of the community (jana samudhaya).

It is in the form of a regular, legal deed. The signatories undertake to attend on and follow when the Rajaguru or his representative visit their place and to abide by all the decisions issued by him. It also acknowledges the authority of the Rajaguru to withdraw Srimukha, cancel it and confer powers on other individuals. In effect, the governing body of President and other is supposed to hold power at the mercy of Rajaguru who can supersede it and have another re-constituted.

Separate statement (affidavits) was filed by the members of the Governing Body expressing their consent to hold office and praying for a Srimukha (order) from the Rajaguru confirming the authority. This document is signed by the four Presidents, two Vice-Presidents and thirteen members of the committee, and a Secretary. It contains the signatures of several witnesses, who witnessed the execution of the document.

Record No. 7

(1) E, daughter of E of Muppanagatti, was given in marriage in Uttarmooru. She did not behave properly. She led a prostitute's life for three years. She was then taken to Atali Kumpagetti beyond the river, and she had 'udiki' marriage, while she had already a husband. Her parents were kept under ban (bahishkara). E of Nadavalakeri had association with E in spite of the fact that she was under ban for having (sexual relations) with Sambagara (jati).

(2) M, daughter of A's son H of Muppanagatti was given in marriage in Kallana on the other side of the river. She did not live harmoniously with her husband.

While this is so, people of Muppanagatti have raised the question as to why Muppanagatti 'Dai vamvari' imposed the ban.

S, E B, Sambagara E, Siddhapura H and others write to the kattermane Yajamana of Tekkalakota as follows :

M E had association (sexual union) with a Sambagara. She was, therefore, under ban. The kattermane authorities have informed the villagers that nobody should keep (social) contact with her. We are communicating it to you. It is not proper to make the whole village responsible for the bad conduct of one woman.

Letter from Tekkalakota Daivacharamvaru to the Yajamana of Valmiki caste in Nandijavatti village

It is learnt that E, daughter of E, of Muppanagatti had union with a Sambagara. We understand that this was communicated to you. The parents of E should be asked to live separately. If they refuse enquiries should be made there. You should not mix with Muppanagatti people. This kind of act (bad conduct) was never done in our caste. It happened only in that village. This should be properly enquired into and further action taken.

To the Sannidhi of Sri Guru (Rajaguru)

The letter written by Nadu Desai B E : the Valmiki caste people of 33 hamlets of Koramandi and 33 hamlets of Tekkalakota addressed to Kattemane Yajamanas of Muppanagatti village of Bellary Taluk and listing their names as follows :

(i) T (ii) G S (iii) M N (iv) B A (v) Y D B (vi) N's son E (the letter continues) your village traditions should not be spoiled on account of your fault. It is 'adharma' that you should commit the faults, in spite of your being the kattemane people. It is improper for one woman to have 3 or 4 husbands. If you are self-respecting and if you know the ways one should behave, your manner of approving the affairs of E, K E is not right.

Baddur E

(This seems to be a letter condemning the action of the kattemane authorities copy of which was sent to Sri Guru.)

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

In the Sannidhanam of Sri Guru

The written statement of Nadavalakere E, Nadugara of Valmiki caste of Tekkalakota gramam.

The three letters concerning E and M of Muppanagatti written by the Nadugara of that village and the letter written to the latter by Nandalli and Vadagolu (hamlets) are related to the bahishkara (ban) imposed on those two women. The letters were presented before you and it was alleged that I wrote the complaints (letters) I am not responsible for it. I did not write the letters. I do not know who wrote them. I have no authority to impose ban on E and M belonging to that kattemane. It concerns them (meaning the other kattemane, *i.e.*, Muppanagatti). To raise objections against (to interfere with the affairs of) the Muppanagatti kattemane who are equal (in status) does not concern me. Therefore, I submit that I have no objections, of any kind, to what is done by them.

(Sd) E. Tekkalakota

Year—Shukla.

Jyestha Sudda. Tuesday.

Two witnesses.

In the Sannidhanam of Sri Guru

The written statement of Muppanagatti Nadugara of Valmiki caste :

Objection letters against us came out in the name of Tekkalakota kattermane. For that reason, differences arose in that kattermane, especially in Naduvalakere E and the matter was reported to you. At your enquiry, Naduvalakere E asserted that he was not aware of it (the reports) and that he did not do it. Moreover, the other Nadugaras also gave similar statements. In view of these facts, we have resolved our differences and shall live like brothers in mutual affection and cordiality.

(Sd) E
D B

Dated 10-6-1929.

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna
Sri Swamilavaru

Shukla-Jyestha-Suddha 4

It was suspected that Tekkalakota Katte Nadugaras and particularly Naduvalakere E wrote objectional petitions against Muppanagatti Nadugaras. The matter came for enquiry and it transpired that no objection petitions were really sent against them (Muppanagatti Nadugaras). This was borne out by the oral statements of Tekkalakota Nadugaras and by the written statement of Naduvalakere E. It is, therefore, announced that no steps of any kind were taken against the Muppanagatti kattermane people.

(Sd) Sri Tholappacharya
10-6-1929

Record No. 8

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

Appeal filed by N A (1) G H (2) T R (3) before Sri Guru Kanakgiri-Anegundi Rajaguru Srinivasa Tholappacharya. The appeal is on the decision made by Anantasayana Gudi Daivachara. The appeal prays that the Yajamana and Divachara should reopen the dispute in C No. 13/15 between Plaintiff T D and Defendant K disposed of on 3-11-1931.

Dated 8-11-31
Anantasayana Gudi

Thumb impression of
T R

These three persons have appealed against the decision arrived at by the Daivamvaru (elders), Yajamana and other elders. This appeal should in fairness be referred to us.

Anantasayana Gudi

Thumb impressions of two persons.

8-11-31

(Sd) G H H

(Sd) K H

Plaintiffs

Appellants

K H D

(1) N A

(2) G H

(3) T S R

Record No. 9

The resolution of the Nayak caste (Boya) of Gadiganur village of Hospet Taluk of Bellary District.

(1) The resolution passed by the Daivachara people of Valmiki caste of Gadiganur of Hospet on 26-4-1934 is as follows :

V son of P N of our village entered the house of a Madiga. It was witnessed by S and three others of our Daivachara. A Madiga woman is staying with him. This was confirmed by our Daivachara. As a result the said V left his house. N, son of M N of our village is also of the same way, i.e., he is behaving in the same manner as V. He too left the house.

Forty thumb impressions and three witnesses

(2) The Muchalika written by the undersigned Daivachara people of Valmiki caste belonging to Gadiganur village of Hospet.

Sri Swami Sannidhanam,

V and N of our village transgressed the rules of our caste. This statement given under the signatures of our Daivachara has been presented by us to your Sannidhanam. The caste status of our caste is superior. It is, therefore, necessary that you should pay a visit to our place, make enquiries, take statements from complainants and respondents and investigate the matter. The Kanikka (fees) due has not been collected for the past (more than) 20 years. We undertake to collect them from our village and also from the neighbouring villages according to status and pay you. We also undertake to bear all the expenses connected with your visit from the date of your entry and until you leave the village. We shall also perform all the services

needed in connection with your stay. We pray that you might be pleased to visit us and give us your blessings, dispose of our case and accept our kanikka.

Camp—Hospet. Bhava, Adhika Vaisakha
Bahula, Chaturthi—Thursday (3-5-1934)

(3) The statement of H, son of M N of Valmiki caste of Gadiganur. My prayer at your Sannidhanam in consequence of the misconduct of my brother, (elder) N and the resulting stigma attaching to me and my having got freed from it through our Daivachara, is that from the time you grant me shuddha patrika, after thirtha prasada by accepting aparada kanikka of Rs. 10, I should be permitted into our community (without any social stigma). The amount will be paid at the time of your visit to our village. I have named K as my guarantor. On the strength of his guarantee, I may be given 2 days time. If I fail to fulfil my word, you have the authority to recover the amount.

Left thumb impression of Valmiki H

(4) I have accepted the statement of H, on behalf of the Daivachara. I stand guarantee for the recovery of Rs. 10 (Aparada kanikka) at Gadiganur village. He may be given thirtha prasadam.

(Sd) K

This contains thumb impressions of 8 persons who gave their consent to this muchalika.

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

In the Sannidhanam of Sri Guru

The Muchalika presented by M N, father of N of Valmiki caste of Gadiganur village.

As the rules of our caste in our village were transgressed, I have this day bound myself to pay Rs. 58 as aparada kanikka at the time of enquiry in your Sannidhanam in accordance with the decisions of our Daivachara and Panchayat elders and take shuddha thambula. I shall not give room for any complaint and penalty in future. I pray that Srimukha may be granted to me so that no faults of any kind are ascribed to me hereafter.

Left thumb impression of N and two signatures
and two thumb impressions

6-5-34

The Muchalika granted with the full consent of the Daivachara of Gadiganur and the neighbouring villages.

We have all consented to the grant of shuddha patrika to N after accepting Rs. 58 for aparada thambula. There are no other faults on him. We have admitted him into the community this day.

Twentyfive thumb impressions

(This Muchalika is confirmed by the Daivachara of the neighbouring villages and contains 5 thumb impressions, 2 signatures and 2 witnesses).

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

10-5-34

This Srimukha is granted in favour of N, after enquiries at our Sannidhanam and in accordance with the consent of Daivachara and Panchayat elders and after receiving the penalty. The Srimukha is granted so that the G may be admitted into the community and given all the privileges as before.

(Sd) Sri Tholappacharya

10-5-34

Record No. 10

This is the decision given on the division of property and the caste customs of the humble disciples (1) D.G. (2) L (3) B (sons of H) (4) H s/o L and the adopted father B, all residents of Mudagal, Dist. Raichur.

Plaintiff

(1) V s/o H
of Mudagal, District Raichur
Caste : Golla

Defendants

(1) B s/o H
(2) R s/o H
(3) H s/o L
Adopted father B, Kattemane Golla of Mudagal, District Raichur

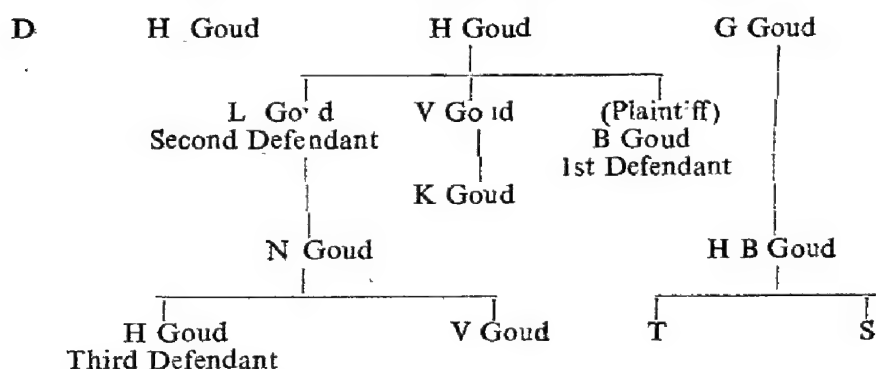
The uncontrollable behaviour of the first defendant made the second and third defendants ask for division of the property. This caused dispute with the plaintiff. The main points of discussion in this are as follows :

- 1 What kind of bad conduct had the first defendant? How was it responsible for the stain on the caste? How was it to be settled?

- 2 In case he (first defendant) was in a bad line, did his caste people allow it? Was he qualified to hold the post of a reddy?
- 3 How were the second and the third defendants connected? How was it responsible for the losses to the plaintiff?

The above points were discussed before their Holiness Sri Swamiji, people belonging to the same caste and other castes and before the people of villages such as Kampli, Ramasagar, Mudhapur, etc. in the temple of Sri Gopalaswamy.

The geneological tree of the plaintiff and the defendants.



- 1 The first defendant was having three keeps and had three children. Such kind of behaviour was uncommon in the family. This brought disgrace to him as well as to the family and community. To get the sympathy from the Samaj people was to be free from them.
- 2 As long as he was in the same line he might lose respect in his post as reddy and in his community.
- 3 The first defendant was away from home for nearly eight to ten years. The second and the third defendants took him into the family. These joined together and lived amicably. They did not mind the loss of the property nor losing the post of reddyship. But this was clear to the plaintiff but he could not check him as they were three. The only solution for that was the good behaviour of the first defendant.

Considering all these the following things have recorded :

- (1) The second defendant's objection was whether, it would be possible to make discussion about division without the first defendant.

- (2) The second defendant's objection to the inclusion of H Goud in the geneological tree.
 - (3) The third defendant's contest to the first defendant having the property of H B Goud without any relationship with him.
 - (4) Plaintiff's and second and third defendant's contest to the division done by panchayat people.
 - (5) Not admitting the fault committed by first defendant himself.
 - (6) In accordance with the willingness of the plaintiff and the second and third defendants, the first defendant's to have the division done among the brothers to be free from all sons.
 - (7) The document of the particulars of division of property, the first, second and third defendants.
 - (8) Geneological tree.
-
- (1) The point of contest was discussed on the strength of the above and was decided that H who was with the first defendant to get Rs. 300 as maintenance for her and her children.
 - (2) T R and G—the own sisters of H B Goud to have 100 sheep and 50 sheep respectively as the expenses of their marriages.
 - (3) The whole property including land, silver, gold, cattle and sheep to be divided equally among first, second and third defendants and the plaintiff after setting apart Rs. 260.
 - (4) The adoption of second defendant's third son V to the first defendant was confirmed.
 - (5) Because the share of H B Goud went to the third defendant, the adoption taken by him previously was approved legally.

The judgment was read before the party and the copy of it was taken by the concerned.

Left hand thumb impressions of
 (1) L G (2) B Goud (3) H B Goud
 the adopted father of H Goud

Record No. 11

Sri Venkateswara Prasanna

Salutations to the Feet of Guru

The father of Y of Potter caste of Yeradoni is A. The daughter of N of Ulanur kattermane was given to Y. It is true that I did it. They did not behave properly towards us. That is kattermane D, N's daughter A V and his father V are important persons of Yeradoni. Y did not treat her (his wife) properly. She, therefore, complained against us. N of this kattermane and other important persons came to us and to the people of Hirativala village and sat in panchayat and tried and settled the matter. They asked us to bear the expenses and demanded Rs. 50 and took Rs. 35 and said that they would look after the matter and deal with the *Daivachara* and Guru. This can be proved by us with witnesses :

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna.

1936

Camp—Kushtigi—Dhatu year

Chaitra suddha saphthami—Sunday

The statement of Y, wife of A, belonging to the Caste Council of Valamur Kattermane of Gampavali Taluk.

For the fault of the wife of my son Y, her father V N and B came and took Rs. 35 and gave the undertaking that they would manage the affairs, whatever may be the consequences. We undertake to present that statement and get them to give evidence in person. If we fail to do so, we are prepared to pay double the amount.

Thumb impressions of (1) Y

(2) T

(3) T

Record No. 12

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

15-8-38

Camp : Hospet

The 'Muchalika' presented by B s/o N of Potter caste belonging to the village of Malapanagudi of Hospet Taluk.

My mother L was married by my father U in the 'Udki' form. My father's first wife died when she was quite young and so my father had to remarry. I was born later (after the second marriage). My brother (elder) G separated from our father on account of the second marriage. Our potter caste people are not allowing my mother

to mix with them, that is, she is not permitted to participate in marriage and other functions on the ground that she belongs to 'Lal Kummar' sect (Red Potter). I have two daughters and two sons. I was married at Chikkalur, Alur Taluk. My case was enquired into by the Kattemane of our caste in Harpanahalle Taluk and my caste disabilities settled. Consequently, I desire your 'Suddha Patrika' (Decree of Purification). I have paid Rs. 11, Rs. 10 for the expenses and Re. 1 for the paper (Suddha Patrum). I take the responsibility of conducting the feasts, etc. for our caste people in the proper manner.

Left hand thumb impressions of M of B

* * * * *

The statement of R wife of P of Malapanagudi :

N's wife mentioned in B's muchalika happens to be my uncle's (father's brother) mother. She is the daughter of P by (Udki marriage). On the strength of your Suddha Patrika, I shall go and have the matter arranged properly.

Left hand thumb impression of M R

Record No. 13

Sri Kanakachala Prasannia

The 'muchchalika' presented jointly by H (mother B) and H (mother D) of jaghir Koppala of Nizam's Dominions :

You had been exercising authority in regard to the spiritual affairs of kattemanes of Koppala, Yelaburga, Kushtigi Sindanur, Gangavathi, i.e., you had nominated Y T, son of U K and grandson of K T, for performing 'mudra' and conducting Guru's work. We were having the caste affairs conducted by him; and we were getting honours due to kattemane of Koppala to which is attached 133 hamlets. While it was so the people of Sindogi caused trouble for the honours.

As a result of it, the affairs were being carried on by the Govt. in the Courts of Tahsildar, Taluqdar and Diwan. We did not have the sense to approach the Simhasana of our Paramaguru, pay our fees (kanikka) and settle the dispute. The matter was thus delayed so long. Now we have recovered our sense and have submitted our papers and evidence and obtained your decision.

Accordingly, we pray that you should grant your Srimukha so that we may carry on the affairs of Jambavakula people of 133 villages attached to Koppala Kattemane and receive the honours without any

objection. We and all the caste people attached to our kattermane undertake to follow you and remit the fees to you from the fines collected for transgression of caste rules. Also whenever you visit our region, we shall pay our honours and respects according to our status and bind ourselves to obey your orders. You are at liberty to replace us whenever we act against your decisions.

Thumb impression of K. G. Srimukham
was granted in accordance with the
above Kararnama undertaking.

Dhatu, Adhika Bhadrapada
Bahula-1—Wednesday
2-9-36 Makkam
Kamalapuram

* * * * *

Sri Kanakachala Lakshminarasimha Prasada

Kamalapura,
Lakshmi Vilas, Hospet.
2-9-36.

Srinivasa Tholappacharya Guru Swami
Jagadguru.

(Samasthana Mudra)

Makkan—Kamalapura

In the year of Dhatu Bhadrapada masa Bahula (1) Wednesday.

The decision given in the matter of the dispute regarding the 'kattermane' of Jambva Kula in Jagir of Koppala in Nizam's Dominions

Plaintiffs

Defendants

1 H mother B of Koppala

1 S C Hirasindogi

2 H mother D of Koppala

2 H Hirasindogi

The dispute arose between the plaintiffs and the defendants in regard to the customary honours due to the caste 'kattermane'.

The plaintiffs complain that the defendants claim the honours of 'kattermane' to themselves while they belong to us and desire that the dispute should be investigated and a decision given.

The defendants furnished a reply to (the plaint) in the matter of the 'kattermane'.

On behalf of the plaintiffs, the following documents were filed.

(K2) and (K3) are the sworn statements of the plaintiffs. K5 is the geneology of the plaintiffs (G) Dasari S-Manapan given by him.

G3—The letter of the previous Maharastrian authorities.

G2—The (statement) given by Desai of Bisamalli.

The documents furnished on behalf of the Defendants.

J 1—The papers given by Koppala Mamlatdar, Old Mudlapur Kotwal and patel in 309/1303.

J 2—The assessment vouchers of Taluqdar of Koppala.

J 3—Copy of the Bronze plate grant of Delhi Bacha in the year Salivahana Sakabdharm 780.

J 4—is an old document.

Witnesses

There were twenty-four witnesses.

There are three important points at issue to be investigated.

1 What is a 'kattemane'?

2 To which place belongs the authority of 'kattemane'?

3 Who are the rightful owners of the place (kattemane) the Plaintiffs or Defendants?

These three points are decided on the basis of the documents furnished.

The dispute started a long time ago. The causes pertaining to this affair were not dealt with in the proper way and had been taken up after long intervals. There was therefore needless waste of time. Each party was simply carrying on the complaint saying that the honours were due to them. They did not care to pay attention and find out who are the rightful owners of the 'kattemane' who should be given the honours (due to kattemane), who has the authority to determine these points. It has to be stated that these matters were not given consideration to by the parties to the dispute or by the Govt.

Courts of Justice run by the Govt. have the authority of the King. There are Acts to protect the property of the people. They are of three kinds, viz., Civil, Criminal and Revenue. One (Act) is for dealing with movable and immovable property. The second (Act) is for the protection of the life of subjects and the third is for the running the Govt. These are concerned with temporal affairs. Similarly the tenets of Dharma are concerned with the elevation of humanity. They are of three kinds. One of them is intended to dispel ignorance and bestow enlightenment. The second is for prescribing the method of Dharma relating to prayaschitha (expiation

ceremony), etc. The third relates to the methods pertaining to Shishyas (disciples). The institution of Gurus exists for the safeguarding of Dharma Sasana which is the foundation for the three kinds explained above.

Kattermane is related to caste and creed and therefore falls within the purview of the Dharma Sasana. It is not covered by any of the three categories of Government Laws (Raja Sasana). It is this Shishasana which holds the imposition of Guru (Samayacharya Guruthwa Hakku) and is, therefore, the power to enquire and decide issues relating to the affairs of kattermane which is concerned with caste and creed.

It is clear that a kattermane is related to a specific area. Kattermane is the source for caste rules. In every region, one village will be the central place for the location of the kattermane. It derives its authority from the people belonging to the respective castes. It attends to the welfare (grievances, etc.) of the community by punishing offenders and by so doing tends to unite the members of the caste. Therefore, it is established that a kattermane is associated with a specific place (not changeable). This kind of kattermane cannot be located in a remote corner but should be in a well-known town (in a central part of the region). Koppala is the Headquarters of Nawab Salar Jung. It is the seat for the Civil, Criminal and Revenue Courts. It is the centre for the whole region and all trade. It is the place where several other castes have their kattermane. Why then such a place could not have the kattermane centre for the Jambave caste alone? This is proved by the evidence furnished on behalf of the plaintiff. Besides this, the information recorded in our old register proves that Koppala is the seat of that Kattermane.

The documents presented on behalf of the Plaintiff G1, G2, G3 by B and other important persons indicate the right of the plaintiff for the kattermane for the past 80 years. The statement of witnesses G1 to 24 submitted on behalf of the plaintiff shows that Koppala is the seat of kattermane and that the plaintiff is the rightful person to receive the customary honours due to kattermane. Among these witnesses Gha 12 and Gha 13 belong to the kattermane of Davanagere and Kushtigi with authority over 130 to 133 hamlets respectively and they are of equal status. Their evidence, therefore, requires immense importance.

K1, K2 sworn statements shows that Koppala kattermane has 133 hamlets within its jurisdiction and the honours from these have been under the enjoyment of the plaintiff. The statements of the witnesses confirm this.

The document No. K4 is the sworn statement showing the geneological order of the plaintiff (vamsavali kramam).

The documents presented by the defendants are J1 to J4. Among these J3 is said to be the copy of a bronze plate grant of the time of Delhi Badshahi. They filed a copy of it that is a very important document. This is very strange. It is said to have been given in Salivahana Saka 780. Part of it is in Kannada and the rest in Islamic script (Urdu). Batcha means Badusha and denotes Mohammedan rule. According to this, it seems to have originated 1038 years ago. According to historical evidence, the Mohammedan rule commenced about 730 years ago, during the time of Mohammed Ghazni. The bronze plate document is supposed to have been 380 years prior to this. Therefore, its veracity is doubtful. Though the Delhi Empire was flourishing from the time of Akbar to Aurangzeb, the region containing the villages under dispute did not come under their sway. Formally, the region was under the Vijayanagar Empire. Subsequently, under Bahmani, Bijapur, Mahratta and lastly the Nizam's rule. Therefore, it is not possible to believe the bronze plate grant produced by the defendants—J4. The document No. J4 is irrelevant, funny and is of no use. The document No. J presented by the defendant refers to the order issued by the Mamlatdar of Koppala taluk regarding the kattemane honours of the plaintiff to the defendants and it does not confer that right to the latter. The document J2 is the muraf faislnama of Koppala Taluqdar. It is stated in the document that the question of deciding the right to the kattemane honours is not within the jurisdiction of either the Mamlatdar or Taluqdar but that of the Dewan. It is not helpful to the defendant. In spite of six adjournments on 5-9-35, 20-9-35, 20-10-35, 31-10-35, 26-11-35, 26-11-35 the defendants have not produced any documents beyond the four already presented nor did they present themselves at the enquiry. They did not also produce any statements of evidence, from any witness. It, therefore, appears that the party does not possess any further proof to establish their right to the kattemane honours.

According to the evidence furnished by the plaintiff and the defendant the third point (the ownership of the kattemane) is in favour of the plaintiff.

In view of the evidence discussed above, it is decided as follows :

Kattemane is a geographical unit (and a fixed unit—'sthanika') and that unit is located at Koppala.

The owners of the kattemane are the plaintiffs.

It has been proved beyond doubt that the plaintiffs have from very early times been holding the authority (Hakku) of the kattermane from generation to generation. So, the defendants have no claim to the kattermane over the 133 hamlets attached to the Koppala kattermane which right belongs to the plaintiffs.

Sri Kanakachala Lakshminarasimha Prasada

Kamalapura,
Lakshmi Vilasa, Hospet
2-9-36.

Srinivasa Tholappacharya Guru Swami
Jagirdar.

(Samasthana Mudra).

Mukkam—Kamalapura.

In the year of Dhatu Bhadrapada masa Bahula (1) Wednesday.

The decision given in the matter of the dispute regarding the 'kattermane' of Jambava Kula in Jagir of Koppala in Nizam's Dominions.

Plaintiffs

Defendants

1 H mother of B of Koppala

1 S C Hirasindogi

2 H mother of D of Koppala

2 H of Hirasindogi

The dispute arose between the plaintiffs and the defendants in regard to the customary honours due to the caste 'Kattermane'.

The plaintiffs complain that the defendants claim the honours of 'kattermane' to themselves while they belong to us and desire that the dispute should be investigated and a decision given.

The defendants furnished a reply (the plaint) in the matter of the 'kattermane'.

On behalf of the plaintiffs, the following documents were filed.

(K2) and (K3) are the sworn statements of the plaintiffs. K5 is the geneology of the plaintiffs (G) Dasari Sivappayya Varu—Manapar.

G3—The letter of the previous Maharastrian authorities.

G2—The (statement) given by Desai of Bisamalli.

* * * * *

The documents furnished on behalf of the Defendants.

J1—The papers given by Koppala Mamlatdar, Old Mudhpur Kotwal and patel in 309/1303.

J2—The assessment vouchers of Taluqdar of Koppala.

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

16th Nov. 1939

Pramada—Karthika

Suddha Guruwara

Kamalapura Mokkal

The receipt granted by Galappa mother B—your dear disciple of Jambayakula of Koppala :

This day, we have received from you the following records which were furnished to you about two years ago in connection with your enquiry regarding the dispute between us and the people of Sindogi—none of our records are with you.

I Koppal Taluk office

File No. 1-28/104

(2) Nizam Saheb—State—Salar Jung—

Dis. No. 16 of 30th,

(3) Koppal Dist Nayan—Dis. File 1325

II Our Court Case file from Vakil Ammuddin Saheb

Record No. 14

28-2-43

Kamalapur,

Chitrabhanu,

Magha—Bahula Navami

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

Before the Sannidhi of Sri Guru.

The Muchalika presented by one of the groups of Valmiki caste people of G, village P, of Hospet Taluk.

In our village there are two divisions in our group for the past four or five years. Its details are :

I—(contains twelve names of persons with the names of their fathers or mothers).

II—(contains eleven names like No. 1 division).

In this manner, there are two groups. The daughter of D-name D-No. 4 of Group I conceived about three months ago. We pray

that no difficulties should arise on account of her pregnancy under the caste rules. We bind ourselves to do according to your instructions.

Seven thumb impressions

The sworn statement of D daughter of D of Valmiki caste of G.

I am about 18 (19) years of age. I did not marry till now. On account of evil advice, I was associated with bad company. The result is that I am pregnant for three months. This is a bad act according to our caste rules. Some way has to be found for the child that would be born. I am bound by any decision that you may take with consent of our caste 'Daiva Chara'.

If I happen to get my marriage settled, before the birth of the child, I shall undergo the ceremony (marriage). If that is not possible, I shall go to you four or five months after the birth of the child and bind myself to carry out any arrangements that you propose.

Left thumb impression of D

The statement of D (father of D)

I and my wife undertake to do all that my daughter D has undertaken to carry out.

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

Kamalapur,
1-3-43.

Chitra Bhanu magha Bahula Dasami
Monday

D, daughter of D of Gadiganur village belonging to one of the Valmiki groups, is about 18 years of age. She is not yet married but she became pregnant as a result of other association. This was enquired into by the group elders (Daivapuvaru) of that group in our Sannidhanam. For the present care should be taken to see that nothing happens to the pregnancy. Steps have been taken with the consent of the group elders that no disabilities arise under the caste rules. There is no objection to settle her marriage (before the birth of the child) if anybody asks for her and no difficulties would occur to anyone who marries her.

Sd/- Sri Tholappacharya
Sir thumb Impressions

Record No. 15

(1)

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

Hospet.

Parthiva Jyestha Bahula,

First Tuesday.

26-6-45

Petition submitted to Sri Anegundi Kanakagiri Rajaguru Sri Srinivasa Tholappacharya Guru by his disciple L wife of A of Setti Banijaga caste of Ramasaguru village.

My daughter G, 16 years of age, was given in marriage six years ago to V son of H grandson of H of Setti Banijaga caste of Kamalapuram. Three years after she matured, her nuptial ceremony was performed. Since then there was normal relationship in the family. After 25 days she was sent to her mother's house in Ramasagar. It is now learnt that another marriage is being arranged for (V). It is learnt that arrangements have been made to marry the daughter of L of Narayana Dewakagiri and the marriage is proposed to be performed within eight days. That girl was already betrothed to the brother of Pallada B and the alliance has not been cancelled.

I am prepared to meet all the expenses for the enquiry and decision at your 'Simhasana' after giving notice to the parties concerned. I shall attend the enquiry on the date fixed by you.

Sd/- Thumb impression of L.

[A list of articles presented (by the husband) during the marriage such as mangala sutrama (gold), saree, silver ornaments totalling seven items is furnished by the petitioner.]

Witness.

Bellary V

* * * *

(2)

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

Parthiva Jyestha Bahula One

26-6-45

(Notice issued by Rajaguru to H father of V.)

The notice issued to the disciple H son of S H of Setti Banijaga caste of Kamalapura.

A complaint has been received in the Sannidhanam from L. on behalf of G, your daughter-in-law that you are arranging to get the daughter of L of N D married to your son. L's daughter was betrothed to another person and there has been no cancellation of that betrothal. You are required to be present at Luxmivilas in Hospet (Rajguru's bungalow) along with your son immediately on receipt of this notice, failing which proceedings will be instituted against you according to the caste rules. Moreover, if without our orders you fix the marriage alliance with the daughter of L of N D whose betrothal has not been annulled, you will be liable according to the caste rules.

Sd/- Sri Tholappacharya

26-6-45

Signature of K. N. Rudrayya who served the Notice on H

* * * *

(3)

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

Hospet

27-6-45

In the Sannidhanam of Anegundi Kanakagiri Rajaguru Sri Srinivasa Tholappacharya Guru Swami.

The statement submitted by V son of S H. According to your notice I presented myself before you. My wife G was not behaving properly nor was she carrying out household duties properly. Owing to ill health I intend to marry another. I had had some medicines given to her (wife). Since she said she would go to her mother's house for recouping her health, I sent her with B for 25 days. Moreover, those who came to Kamalapuram did not come to my house but stayed at other places and went and made complaint to your Sannidhanam. She (wife) is not guilty of any kind of fault in her conduct. Even if I marry again, I shall bind myself to carry on family life with both the wives. I shall bind myself to my decision that you may pass after hearing both the parties.

Sd/- B V

Witness :

K. M. R.

* * * *

(4)

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

In the Sannidhanam of Sri Swami.

The statement (muchalika) given by V son of K.

Since my wife, G and myself had not been carrying on marital life for some time past, I was making attempts to get married again. I presented myself at your Sannidhanam in compliance with your notice issued to me on her complaint and submitted my statement. Enquiry was held at your Sannidhanam in accordance with the rules of the caste and the community. I have agreed to abide by the following decisions :

- (1) I shall not make attempts for performing a (second) marriage for six months from now.
- (2) I shall keep my wife in my house and give her strength. Till then I shall not trouble her for not performing household duties.
- (3) She should do household work immediately after she is cured of her weakness. If in this manner our marital life proceeds harmoniously there will be no need for marrying again.
- (4) I shall report to you about our experience after six months and shall bind myself to carry out your decisions.

Sd/- Setti Baniyaga V.

Witness :

1 P N

2 B V

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(5)

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

27-6-45

Hospet.

Sri Anegundi Kanakagiri Rajagura Srinivasa Tholappacharya Swami.

Parthiva Jyeshta Bahula 2

The statement (muchalika) submitted by G. wife of K. I heard the conditions (agreed to) by V my husband. I shall abide by the conditions and shall stay in his house, take the medicines, given by

him, following diet restrictions and try to recover my health within three months. Thereafter I shall carry on household duties according to his wishes. I shall conduct myself in the proper manner and without giving any room for complaint within these six months. If, however, I commit any offence and become guilty either on account of sexual misconduct or on account of my ill-health or obstinacy, my husband will not be blamed. I shall not make any objection to behaving properly during these six months. This is the statement given after agreeing to the compromise.

Sd/- G

* * * *

(6)

L's statement

I give my consent to the muchalika given by my daughter I take the responsibility to advise my daughter to be wise and behave properly.

Thumb impression of L.

Witness :

P N &

B V

* * * *

(7)

15 (5)

27-6-1945

Hospet.

Parthiva Jyeshta Bahula 2

Sri Anegundi Kanakaguru Rajaguru Srinivasa Tholappacharya-lavaru.

The decision made following the compromise between V son of S of Setti Banijaga caste of Kamalapura (on one side) and his wife G (on the other).

The enquiry was conducted today on the complaint by G wife of V. The enquiry was carried out according to the rules of the caste. The cause of the dispute was the ill-feeling between the husband and the wife. It is not possible to determine the causes for the ill-feeling until the physical weakness of G. is remedied. For this reason the matter has to be postponed for six months so that the behaviour of the parties (husband and wife) may be watched and investigated. Meanwhile, the manner in which the couple should behave has been prescribed and their written undertaking obtained, The matter will be

enquired into after six months after hearing the experiences of both the parties.

Till then it has been ensured that the husband and wife will live amicably and that arrangements will be made to give treatment to the wife for the restoration of her health. This gives them an opportunity for gradually developing mutual love.

Sd/- Sri Tholappacharya

Sd/- P N

K M

H S

Bellary V

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Record No. 16

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

Sri Guru

Camp : Hospet

Year : Vyaya—Pushya Bahula 6—Sunday 12-1-47.

It is learnt that S wife of Uppara H of Kanakapur of Koppala Ilaka was married by K son of K. B.

It must be seen that in this matter the husband H obtained justice through the important Daiva (Committee).

Sri Tholappacharya

14-1-47

Sri Lakshmi Prasanna

To

The Guru's Sannidhi

Salutations by the Kattemane Daivamvaureu. We are doing well by your blessings. We received the note sent by you on Sunday Pushya Bahula 6. It is learnt that B's son K married S in (udiki fashion) in Kotrihalli in the absence of the Daivam people of our village. This business was not done in our village. When we were invited we did not go. The act done without the daivamvaru and Guru is against Dharma. If unjust acts like this are perpetrated, what will be the fate of poor people. You should make full enquiries in this matter and give your decision. We are communicating this to you.

Four thumb impressions.

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Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

In the Sannidhi of Sri Guru.

The muchalika given by B's son H, uppara, Ginigeri Kamalapura of Koppala Ilaka.

I have come to know that S my married wife was married to K, son of K B of Ginigeri. This happened about a week ago. I pray that investigations should be made according to the caste rules and justice meted out. I do not want her in future. I am prepared to pay my marriage expenses of Rs. 30. I cannot afford to pay your sambhavana, etc. Instead, the amount that should be recovered from K as marriage expenses may be given to you. It is enough that you give me the betel leaves (Veelyam) given in this case. I shall execute the Release Bond immediately after you order it. If they (the other party) do not conform to this, I pray that proper action should be taken against them according to the caste rules.

The above mentioned amount can be paid by me tomorrow, i.e., Wednesday.

L T of H & B

* * * * *

14-1-47

Letter to Bhima Dasa of Ginigeri

As soon as you see this letter tomorrow, you should proceed to Gangavati by the morning motor. There you should go to the house of Joshi H, residing near Nagareswara Dewasthanam, give a receipt, obtain a chair and a box and return to Ginigeri by the returning motor. They should be kept at the house of B of Uppara kattermane. We have to come to Ginigeri by this time. A sum of Rs. 2 being the bus charges has been sent to you. This should be noted.

NOTE : The above letter is apparently from the Sannidhanam but it is not clearly mentioned.

* * * * *

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

The statement made in the Sannidhanam. (The statement) written (on my behalf) by H son of B Ittigi of Kanakapura.

S is my wife by marriage. Her brother M had her given in udiki marriage to another person. K son of B of Ginigeri married her by tying the tali mangala sutra. I have not got released. The Release-Bond has not been executed. I have not taken back the mangala sutra.

I have not received the expenses of marriage, *i.e.*, I came to know of this after the marriage. I do not want her now. All the things due to me must be returned to me. My *mangala sutram* should be returned to me. I shall abide by the decision that may be passed after due enquiries. At the time of marriage I gave her ear-rings (gold), nose ring (2) bangles $2\frac{1}{2}$ tolas, silver vanki, gold ring one, 2 silver toe rings. These were on her person. Besides these was some cash. This is what happened and I have made it known.

L T of H

Sd/- Sri T

23-1-47

Vyaya—Maghu Suddha 1 Thursday Camp Ginigeri

* * * * *

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

The sworn statement (of K) made in the Guru's sannidhanam

Your dear disciple K's son of B of Uppara of Kotrihalli Ginigeri, Koppal, Nizam's Ilaka.

I am about 35 years of age. I am living in this place from the time of my forefathers. I have a brother. We are living together (joint family). Agriculture is our profession. We have two bulis and a cart. I had married my sister's (elder) daughter from Alavandi, Baisapura. She died sometime after she gave birth to a son. Thereafter, I married a girl of Bevahalli. Her name is H. She gave birth to two male children, but one of them died. There is one child living. At this time, I married (udiki) S wife of Uppara H son of B, while her husband is alive. Her brother M son of B arranged and performed the marriage. There is no document of release from the husband. The tali (of the husband) was not also returned. Her brother M is responsible for it. He advised me and I took her. No marriage expenses were paid. I paid Rs 200 to M for the udiki. The dowry for udiki marriage is double that of ordinary marriage. So I gave (that amount). I am not aware of the rule that should get the consent of the Kulachara people (evidently meaning the Daivachara) before I married. I do not know that I should pay her husband the marriage expenses. I realise that (what I did) is wrong. I bind myself to act according to your judgement. Moreover, I shall be present at the enquiry and bring my witnesses. I shall be bound to abide by your decision after enquiry.

L T impression of K

24-1-47

* * * * *

Letter to K 24-1-47

You have paid the expenses and asked for time. According to your request the case has been posted for hearing tomorrow. You have been given an opportunity to be present with your witnesses. You should come with the witnesses who have to come.

Sd/- Sri Tholappacharya

* * * * *

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

In the Sannidhanam of Sri Guru, the sworn statement of M.

I, M, son of B of Halevasti G, your dear disciple, submit the (following) statement.

S is my sister. She was given to H of Kanakapuram. They never got on well. The udiki marriage to K was performed 15 days ago. There is no Release deed from the husband. He was not given the expenses of marriage, etc. The tali (nangala sutram) tied by him has not been returned to him. I gave my sister S to K in udiki marriage. I have taken from him Rs. 200 as dowry. Meanwhile, my sister quarrelled with her husband and was living in my house. I intervened and effected a compromise and gave them some articles. They are a gold bracelet (1½ tolas), earnings 2, 1 plate, 1 vesse! and Rs. 10 worth shawl, carpet, a silk saree. That is why I took Rs. 200 mentioned above. Their family life was not running properly. I shall produce the relevant record at 2 p.m. this afternoon. I may be given time till then. They were not getting on well for the past 10 years. When my uncle asked H about it, he said he would not take his wife nor would he give a Release Bond. Thereafter, I had the following published in the Hubli Samyukta Karnataka paper. "I supported my sister for the past 10 years having her in my house and borrowing money. The expenditure came to 5 to 6 hundred rupees. She may be taken back after paying this amount. 15 days time is given for this. If the entire amount is not paid within that time and if she is not taken back, she will be married again". It is nearly 14 months since the publication was made in the above manner. I sent a copy of the paper to the husband. He returned the paper after fixing his thumb impression. I have got it with me. He did not come even after he received this paper nor did he give any reply.

Sd/- Tholappacharya

* * * * *

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

In the Guru's sannidhanam

The statement of the Daiva mandali of Sagara kula of Ginigeri. village of Koppala Taluk.

We heard that K of our village tied the tali and had udki marriage with S the wife of K H. This was done in Kottrehalli and not in our village. We did not go (there). According to our caste code nobody will do udki (marriage) when husband has not given the release and when he has not taken back the tali (mangala sutram). It will impute evil reputation to the woman that she has left her husband.

The dowry amount should be handed over to the Guru. That it was done without your orders is improper. All the acts mentioned above are against the custom and therefore constitute bad conduct. The case should be decided and justice meted out. The act of K in marrying (udki) and that of M is having it done are both wrong. We do not approve it. We give our undertaking to proceed according to your decision after your enquiry.

Eighteen thumb impressions

* * * * *

Memorandum issued by Sri Tholappacharya, Ginigeri

M of Ginigeri and his sister came to our Sannidhanam and gave S in marriage to K. Notice that no objection was received here. The compromise was effected by the kattermane Daiwam people of Sindogi and Kutrihalli (name of persons of these committees are mentioned). Ginigeri kattermane people and Sindogi Daiwamvaru joined in this. There should be no further objection to this. If there is any doubt in your minds, you may go to Beganahalli Desai and get it cleared.

Sd/- Sri Tholappacharya

* * * * *

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

In the Sannidhanam of Sri Guru

The Release Bond furnished by H son of B of Itiga, Uppara Caste, of Kanakapura

K married my wife S tying the tali. For that the expenses of my marriage and other dues have been received by me. The tali has also been received in your presence. From this day, I cease to hold my authority on her as husband.

L T impression of K H

Camp : Ginigeri

Srimukha was granted by the Sri Guru

* * * * *

Record No. 17**13-3-1946****Sri Kanakachala Lakshmi Narsimha Prasanna****Sri Anagundi Kanakagiri****To****The Rajaguru Srinivasa Tholappacharya Guruswami**

I, one among your groups of sishyas (disciples), prostrating myself, write as follows :

Gurudeva ! There is a lass in my house. Her parents are Harijans. The parents became the disciples of a Muslim Guru. After sometime attempts were being made to get the lass converted into Muhamadanism. At that juncture, I took over the charge of the lass from the parents. As I have no daughter of my own, I have brought her up as my daughter. The girl's father has died. Even when he was alive, he had handed over complete control over the girl to me. I pray that you might bestow your blessings so that the admission of the girl into my gotra (lineage), making her my daughter may not meet with any kind of objection from Kulachara (caste or clan traditions) or from my relatives.

When your eldest son came to Hospet on 19-1-1946, I made this request. The child (the girl) has grown up. She cannot be retained for a long time. She will complete IIIrd Form (School) by the 31st March 1946. So I wish to have the 'Chakrankana' (initiation) performed on her. I wish to proceed to Kanakagiri for the Festival there. I want to see you on my way to the Festival. But it is not possible to go to you till 17-3-46. I am ready to go to you on any day after 18-3-46. I may be excused for informing you of the date. As the District Board meeting is fixed for 15-3-46 at Kuduvalthi in Harpanahalli Taluk, I had to inform you about the dates. My taking part in the affairs of the Government is also due to your blessings. Hoping that by your grace all my activities will bear fruit. I offer my hearty salutations.

Your disciple.

S D

Chitikala Gothram

* * * * *

Post Card written by D.G.D. to Sri Tholappacharya

Alur, 20-3-46

D.G.D. in this post card reminds the Swamiji regarding his request made in his letter dated 13-3-46 and prays for a reply.

Letter from the Swamiji dated 28-3-46

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

Hospet, 28-4-46

From

Sri Anegundi Kanakagiri, Rajaguru's Sannidhi

In the year of 'Vijaya' month of Chaitra and in the waning moon fortnight, on the 12th of that month and on Sunday. This day, the initiation ceremony (Chakrankana) was performed on the foster-daughter of our dear disciple D.G.D. (Harijan) of Alur, Bellary District. The rite was performed according to the tenets of Ramanuja mata and she was given Vaishnava diksha and given the name of Seshamma.

True Translation

Translation : Srimukham issued by Sri Rajaguru dated 24-8-1958 in the year of Vilambi and month of Avani, Suddha 12.

* * * * *

Hospet. Bijapur District, Halasanda Taluk, Kandagallu Villages to the disciples of the Simhasana—Yadava caste, in the matter of B & M—the Yadava caste elders of Kandagallu grama sent an application for the reconversion of B & M. These persons their family members have been given expiation by giving Vaishnava Diksha, mudradharana and panchagavya prasada.

Those who had changed their matha owing to adverse circumstances do not thereby lose their caste status of the (parent caste) group in which they were born. Caste status is hereditary for a man is bound to his caste by his birth, i.e., *Dehasriya* while religious affiliation is acquired (*bhavasriya*-bhava-inclination). These persons having changed their religious beliefs of the Hindu faith have continued to practise (Yadava caste customs, food, manners and customs)—————. Therefore, the Yadava caste members should accept these families without any objection and participate in all their caste affairs.

* * * * *

Record No. 18

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

Hospet
Vaisaka Suddha
19-4-1950

In the Sannidhanam of Anegundi Kanakagiri Rajaguru

The muchalika presented by KH son of H of Uppara caste of eighth ward of the village of Kolangu.

Seven or eight years ago. K.T's (paternal) uncle (younger) E (V) myself, Pujari of Daroji, H D R, B took part in the celebration of the marriage of the son of VT. We were not aware of his family affairs. It was alleged that we had adopted false methods and D K recovered penalties from all the persons except me.

Last year at the time of Daroji marriage, my affair was judged and the kattermane recovered a fee of Rs. 75 from me as penalty (tappu dandam). Even when I asked them what the family faults of O were, they did not tell me. I paid Rs. 75 to the Kattermane through my brother P. The latter is responsible for the imposition of the fault on me and the recovery of the fee. Whatever it may be a sum of Rs. 75 reached the kattermane of Duroji.

My sister, L was given in marriage to D T. I heard that for her son (my nephew) my younger brother's daughter was proposed for marriage and that the betrothal ceremony was performed at Duroji. I also heard that the marriage would be performed on Shudha Navami at Duroji. It is not proper that either my brother or my brother-in-law and even the kattermane should do it, leaving me out. I do not want that money. I do not desire that the acts should not be proceeded with. The kattermane people are saying that fault (tappu) exists. For this reason I pay that you should conduct an enquiry and decide the matter. I shall be bound by any decision you may grant. I agree to pay Rs. 50 to your simhasana towards the fee to cover the expenses of the enquiry and for issuing notices to the persons concerned. I shall pay the said amount on 21-4-50 and shall be present for the impending enquiry. Besides this, I shall produce witness to prove my case. I, also, undertake to arrange for the feeding of the Kattermane people during the period of enquiry. I am also willing to pay any penalties if so decided after the enquiry.

Left thumb impression of
KH

* * * * *

We, Kolangala Uppara E, son of G and G both give the assurance of payment of Rs. 50 as mentioned above (in the petition of H) on 21-4-50. Besides we hold ourselves responsible for the enquiry.

Sd/- Uppara E
L T impressions of
KT
JG and
KH

* * * * *

Hospet
19-4-50

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

H son of Uppara H of Kolagalli village presented a (written) complaint in our Sannidhanam today. It is mentioned (in the complaint) that for having attended the marriage of V O's son, the kattermane of Daroji recovered Rs. 75 as fine (fault fee) and cleared him, but that it is proposed to conduct marriage ceremonies leaving him out.

What is the fault attached to O and proved by records? What is the fault for which the fine of Rs. 75 was imposed on H? It is the duty of all concerned that these matters should be enquired into at the Sannidhanam and proper decision arrived at. The following persons should therefore be present at the enquiry which will be conducted on Vaisakha Suddha Panchami—Friday—noon at our mandiram. This notice is accordingly issued. If any one fails to attend the matter will be decided on merits. This should be clearly noted.

K P Daivam

Daraj

Kattermane

T T's on of An

Pujari H

Pujari H

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Hospet
21-4-50

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

The written statement of K E of Kolagalli Uraf alias G's son T.

I served your notice on the people of Daroji kattermane. They did not give me proper reply. They do not want to come as there is no chance for their misdeeds here. That is what I learnt. In one village there are eight houses of the eighth ward Uppara. Of these, three houses do not belong to Daroji kattermane. The rest (5) belong to it. Now H's brother P formed alliance with Daroji people and had the marriage performed within a few days. Meantime, Daroji kattermane people have collected Rs. 51 in the year when H was accused of having attended the marriage of O's son. What is O's fault is not known. Whatever it may be it is wrong on the part of kattermane to collect money and further accuse H and prevent him from attending marriages.

They may be great persons but what they did was injustice. Even if we are small people, we have consented to manage our affairs with the four persons of Kolagalli.

* * * * *

Hospet
21-4-50

H's son of Hanumanthappa of eighth ward of Kolagalli village Uppara has presented a complaint to this Sannidhanam through G and E of the seventh ward stating that for attending the marriage of the son of V O. The kattermane of Daroji had imposed a penalty and that after receiving it, have again declared him guilty. From the statement of J T who is aged 70 years. it is evident that O's family is not of Sarvi Sambandam (the result of udkki form of marriage) and that therefore it is wrong to make any differentiation in the matter of his lineage or marriage ceremonies. Moreover, it is learnt that three others who attended the marriage were made to pay the fine and the ban on them removed. In the same manner, the penalty was recovered from H also but the objection against him is continued. It is not in accordance with caste manners.

His son-in-law H's father, H performed the marriage. Knowing it is objectionable KV DH, SV took part. This is borne out by the evidence of Junkala T.

What is important is that it is the duty of kattermane and daiva-chara to conduct the caste affairs with justice and according to Dharma. If accusations and ex-communications are made against persons of equal (and normal) status in the caste, H will have cause to take action against such people (those who are responsible for accusations and ex-communication). Therefore, it is decided that kattermane should conduct its affairs without giving room for complaint and maintain its honour and dignity. Nobody has any authority to impose a ban on H.

* * * * *

21-4-50

Kolagalli Uppara V

It is learnt from your brother H that you received Rs. 75 from and paid to the kattermane, daivachara and held responsible (for freeing him from the fault) but that you intend to have a marriage celebrated banning him. If you do so, you will be liable for action being taken against you by your brother.

* * * * *

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

21-4-50

Camp : Hospet

Vikranti Vaisakha Sudha 4

In the Sri Guru's Sannidhanam

The sworn statement of J.T. son of J.U. formally of C.S. and now resident of Kurugodu eighth ward.

I am now 70 years old. I am therefore aware of the family and caste affairs in our community for the past several years. It is now 10 years since I left S and came to K. The family of V O is not of Serva sambanda (of udiki marriage). If it is serva sambanda, the rites of Bhuma Siraji. etc., are not done. Moreover there are marriage connections between Vaddatti, Kolaguallu and Daroji people. The fault was imposed on O for misconduct. It is nothing to do with serva sambanda. H the father of H, the son-in-law of H is my sister's husband and H's aunt, i.e., H's sister was given in marriage to H. In this manner, O is related to Kolagulli people. I performed the marriage of H's mother. The kattermane of Daroji recovered the penalty from K T his uncle (young paternal uncle). E Duroj Pujari H, Duroji R, B who attended the marriage of O's son and permitted them to join the kattermane. Yet they have not permitted H to join them even after receiving the penalty from him. I have settled many family (caste) affairs during my life of 70 years. I have not known (seen or heard) an improper and unjust case like this, where decision was made from time to time but the fault is imposed again.

Besides, I heard that H's marriage was performed by some unknown persons and that for that reason K people made objections. The persons who had the marriage performed were KV, DH, SV. These three persons did it under the Yajamanya of KDD. I was present at the marriage. I have (thus) given all the information within my knowledge. For this I pray for your decision.

L T impression of

J T

H

B

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Record No. 19

Copy of judgement (decision) delivered by Rajaguru
Srinivasa Tholappacharya

Mukkam : Hospet

1951—In the year of Khera, Ashada Masa, Bahula (waning
half of month) 14th

Dearest Sishya (disciple)

Plaintiff : G. (A G's wife)—Sanganakalli

Defendants : G. T. son of B—Sanganakalli

M's son B—Kolapalli

The cause of this suit (dispute) arose on account of the fact that the first defendant's daughter was promised (betrothed) to the plaintiff's son with customary exchange of betel leaves but was (later) promised to be given in marriage to the second defendant's son. Just as the Laws enacted by Government the laws of Dharma are established by society. People should conduct themselves according to these laws (Dharma). Morality (Niti) and act of 'niyama' (self control) are all included in the laws of Raja Dharma. It is our policy (mata) to scrutinize and judge (cases) with reference to these (laws). When it is decided to give a girl (in marriage) to a boy, it is the custom to assemble the relatives and distribute betel leaves and nuts. After that it is done it is wrong to cancel the marriage. The act of ignoring the common procedure and the adoption of an extra ordinary is fit for enquiry and judgment.

According to the above, the daughter of the first defendant was promised to the son of G the plaintiff and the betel leaves were distributed. For breaking the promise the plaintiff brought the complaint to us on 1-6-1959. In the said petition (of complaint) it was stated that attempts were being made for the betrothal of the girl (already) betrothed to the plaintiff's son, to the second defendant's son.

2. Notices were issued on the same day to the two defendants in Sanganakalli and Kolugalli and that until the matter is fully enquired into and a decision reached they should not proceed further in the matter. Notices were also issued to the people of Kolugalli and Sangana Kalli.

3 & 4 The consent of Kolugalli people (council) was filed. On 3-6-51 the two defendants and the elders of Sanganakalli were present. The first defendant gave details of some of the differences between him and the plaintiff and wanted a settlement of the differences (and objections) and gave a statement that he would abide by their

decision. The people's council of Sanganakalli also gave a statement endorsing the statement of the (first) defendant. The second defendant gave a statement in which he was not aware of the fact that the first defendant had promised his daughter to another boy before betrothing her to his son (second defendant's) that it is not right according to the caste convention that a girl so betrothed (previously) should be married by another boy and agreed that he would be bound by the decision passed after enquiry in regard to what was unjust. Sanganakalli people have also filed a request and notices were sent to the parties to be present on 5-8-59 for enquiry. The people of Sanganakalli and of Kolugalli, decided that the ceremony would be postponed if the first defendant and his wife together undertake not to give the girl to the plaintiff's son or to the second defendant's son. The undertaking was taken in writing. On behalf of the people of Sanganakalli E (V) as the responsible person had the statement recorded. V's evidence that in spite of the above, the couple (first defendant and his wife) consented to give the girl to the second defendant's son was not proved. The first defendant's daughter alone gave the statement.

5 On 7-6-51 first defendant and his wife were present and they wanted one month's adjournment of the case so that they may think well and give their statement. Meanwhile the people came and told us that the defendants broke their agreement and had the marriage performed. We consented to hold the enquiry at Bellary and sent notices to all the parties concerned on 8-7-51. On the date of enquiry which is fixed for 28-7-59 the parties were asked to be present. This was communicated to the people of Sanganakalli and the plaintiff and first defendant. The same afternoon communication was sent to the people of Kolugalli and the second defendant to be present at the enquiry.

6 On 30-7-51 the first defendant's wife left her husband since the latter acted against the undertaking given by her and went to her mother's house. It is, therefore, evident that the mother of the girl was not present at the marriage ceremony.

The first defendant caused trouble to the family by hastening the marriage. If he had waited for some time more, he could have avoided trouble.

7 Subsequent to the enquiry at Sanganakalli, the council attached to it at Bellary expressed its opinion which is important and deserves consideration. Its purport is as follows :

In our Sagara caste once a girl is betrothed, it is improper to fix another match without settling any disputes that might have arisen

(between the first parties). The action of B (first defendant) in giving his daughter to B's son (of Kolugalli) is improper. Moreover, after his wife had left him it (separation) should have been decided before any auspicious ceremony is performed. This is the second fault. B acted contrary to his written petition asking for a month's adjournment. This is another fault. More than all these, after having made all of us to come to Bellary for enquiry, he failed to appear before us and stayed at Sanganakalli. His action is not submitting to advice and reason and hastening the matter (marriage) is both unjust and improper.

UB of Kolugalli committed a serious offence in hastily performing the marriage of his son with B's daughter after having given his consent to abide by the orders of the joint statement of B and his wife K.

8 In addition to the recorded statements cited above, the private opinions of the individuals were also heard. The substance of these opinions is as follows :

The first and second defendants failed to act according to their written undertaking. They did not obtain a decision. That the first and second defendants acted against the traditions of the Sagara caste at every stage of their conduct is communicated to the Sagara caste kattermane, Daivachara and Desabhaga of Kolugalli (area) (as a warning).

* * * * *

Record No. 20

Uppara Caste

B has two grand daughters. His mother was V, who was married by her father P in the udiki form (widow remarriage). So B suffered from a social stigma. He was not allowed to participate in any marriage ceremony in his caste group. His two daughters were given in marriage. One of them by name H has two daughters. B wants the authority of Rajaguru to have the marriage of the two girls performed without any obstruction (from his caste group) and also to remove the social ban on him so that he may participate in marriage ceremonies performed in the village.

The Rajaguru accordingly granted a Srimukham by which the obstacles to the marriage of the two girls were removed as also the ban on B and his family.—Date 25-5-45.

Record No. 21

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

Sri Anegundi Kanakagiri Raj-guru

Srinivasa Tholappacharya Swami

Camp : Hospet

14-5-1959

*Vikari, Vaisakh Shuddha**Saptami*

The decision arrived at on the complaint presented by T. H. wife of S. D. of Lokeswara Valmiki caste of Muthigi kattemane of Harpanahalli Taluk and after a scrutiny of the documents relevant to the complaint.

On the basis of an allegation that the daughter of the complaint T and K had a quarrel (fight) on account of which on 27-10-58 a printed notice reached T followed by a document of ex-communication.

It is unwise on the part of any one to send such excommunication notices on anybody's name. They will be subjected to ridicule. At the present time, it is not so easy to keep out a person from the Samajam (community). There are Magistrates' courts to decide mutual quarrels. It is wrong that others should interfere in them as it is unauthorized, improper and impertinent. Considered in this way, it is established that nobody has any authority to punish T for (alleged case).

Besides, the majority of Daiwam people of Lokeswara muthigi villages seem to be favourable to the complainant.

Record No. 22*Camp : Gangavathi.*

The decision on the dispute between Uppara H.V. our disciple of H village of G taluk and his udiki wife N.

*Plaintiff**Defendant*

V s/o M

N d/o B and Udiki wife of H V

Resident of J.

- 1 Dispute began on account of H. V. leaving his udiki wife N.
- 2 There were three important points for discussion.
- 3 Between the husband and the wife who was the cause of divorce.

4 Time passed after divorce. Had they ever lived together once again after divorce.

5 Were there children? If so, to whom were they born (husband or Udiki husband)- With whom was the defendant after divorce-

6 Discussion was held in a temple before the people of same caste and those of other castes and with the oral statements of all the witnesses to settle the case in contest.

7 To make the enquiry easy the documents were termed as 'k', 'kh', etc. (Telugu consonants).

(k) The petition of the plaintiff.

(kha) The Mahajar from Sagar Daivachar people of Here Jautakal, the place of the plaintiff.

(g) The statements of the plaintiff.

(gha) The contest of the first husband who was brought to the Court by the plaintiff.

(gna) The notice given by the defendant.

(cha, chcha) Oral statements of the people who had been to call the defendants.

(chcha, ja) The oral statements of Kathimanigonda Kondakar.

(tta) Oral statement of reddy and Karnam of Plaintiff's place.

(d, da) Oral statements of the people of the plaintiff's place.

(nna) Notice to the defendants.

(the) Defendant's reply to the Notice.

(ttha) The statement of the V.O's of S village.

(tha) Oral statement of the defendant's maternal uncle.

(th tha) Oral statement of the important people of Sagar Kula.

(pa) Oral statement of the reddy of Y village.

(pha) Oral statement of the Achar.

The dispute was settled on the strength of the statement of the above witnesses.

The delay for settling the dispute was due to our stopping Sanchar. It could have been settled long ago.

1 The defendant N went to her mother's house some days after Udiki marriage and did not return to her husband. Regarding this a petition was given thirteen years ago by the plaintiff.

2 A mahajar was given to see the community free from the stain by the daughter born to N though they were not living together for many years.

3 To prove the statements 'ja' and 'ka'.

4 (ghi) bringing N's marrying another person after her divorce from Udiki husband.

5 (gna) about the firm decision of the defendant.

6 (ch, chcha) defendant's not returning though sent for and about he bad character.

7 (ch to d) were the statements given by the (Kulakkattu) people, village officers, protectors of the village, Henjantakal. All these proved that the plaintiff and defendant were not living together for more than twelve years.

8 (nn and jha) notice to the defendant who was at Sidi kesi village to prove her cause. In case the defendant did not present herself to prove her cause after receiving the notice to prove her guilt.

Their Holiness Rajaguru's camping at Kustigi to take the written statements from the important villagers of Sidikesi, the place of the defendant.

Oral statements of the maternal uncle of the defendant and the important people of S village. These play an important part in revealing the character of the defendant. They reveal also the fact that she was living with Baligar R after the divorce and she had girl to him, who was then ten years old and a boy aged eighteen months. She is kept out of the community on account of the above. These were proved by the above documents.

The day fixed for N to plead that she was not guilty was Sunday and Pushya Suddha five of Angiras year. She did not turn up. So the plaintiff cause was proved to be true.

By looking deep into the above circumstances, it was plain that the defendant was a woman of very bad character and it is merely to deceive the plaintiff she married him.

But in these days many a wife living with her husband plays tricks on her husband to have her own way. But the defendant leaving her husband lived in a far off village with another man for twelve years. The reply given by her on 3-2-36 clearly showed that she had divorced her husband and quenching her lust living with a third person. She, herself, was responsible for the troubles and losses caused by free behaviour and none else. Her free behaviour was proved by the fact that she had second udiki marriage.

So her first husband divorced her being disgusted with her bad and unchecked behaviour. Her udiki marriage with the plaintiff was

for his property but not out of love. Even then she could have lived with him for some time at least but she did not do so. Therefore all had the unanimous opinion about her.

The long duration of separation of twelve years could not bring back the living of husband and wife together.

All these facts prove that the defendant herself was responsible for the divorce.

All the oral statements by all the people concerned are unfavourable to the defendant. It was very regrettable that nothing could be done to the defendant as it was a dispute controlled by the principles of the Samaj.

All oral statements from the important people of defendant's place go against her. She married B R after the divorce and had a girl and boy to him. Thus she was not with him for twelve years. Naturally the plaintiff must have the case settled in his favour.

It is clear on the strength of the points neither (the wife) N nor her children had any claim on the plaintiff (the husband). So the case was settled accordingly.

Record No. 23

Case of R—Uppara and his wife

R makes a complaint that his wife left him and had children by other men, one of whom was of Valmiki caste. Subsequently he files another statement withdrawing his allegations and stating that his wife was not immoral and that all the children were born to him and that she returned to his house and lived with him.

The Rajaguru decides that since the husband and wife are living happily it is wrong for others to disrupt the family by making allegations. Moreover, it was proved that every stage the Wivam people had approved their actions to that effect. Srimukham was awarded. There is reference to records dated 20-6-41, 17-9-49, etc.

Record No. 24

Uppara Caste

The representation made by five person H, H. H. K, B and K of Koppala, Yalaburga Taluk, Kavalur gramam regarding the family of A D and his wife H who were under a social stigma from the time of D's grandfather for nearly sixty years. The statement submitted by the petitioners contains a geneological table of D's family. Under the stigma K's wife H was not allowed to participate in any marriage ceremony. Nobody knows how and why the stigma was

imposed. On account of this, the caste people are divided into two camps, in which one party consists of sixteen families out of sixty families of the village. The petition says that they are prepared to pay Rs. 500 to meet the expenses for performing the necessary ceremonies for the removal of the stigma so that all the families of the Uppara caste in the village may unite.

The Raj Guru investigated the case and after going through the records, produced by the parties declared that the stigma which was imposed by sixty years ago, the reasons for the same not being known shall be treated as null and void and the parties may unite as brothers. There was no proof for the transgressions allowed to have been made by the ancestors of D sixty years ago. Hence the ban was removed after performing the customary rites for which all the expenses were met by the people of the village.

Record No. 25

This is a printed leaflet explaining the history and origin of the caste called Sagarā. The pamphlet was prepared by the Raj Guru for enlightening the caste people as to their status in ancient times. It says that they are the descendants of Sagara Chakravarti of Ikshvaku dynasty (Kshatriya). It contains the story of the curse of Kapila Muni on the sons of Sagara Chakravarti by his second wife for desecrating and disturbing his penance in the 'patala' loka and their deaths by being reduced to ashes. The descendants of Sagara had to roam about the forests and hills in search of theme. Some of the descendants of Sagara Chakravarti dug the earth, and the ocean came into existence (Sagara). These came to be called Sagaras. Those who took up the occupation of making salt from sea came to be called 'Melu' Sakkai. Those that lived by making salt from earth were called Uppara and those who in course of time migrated to towns and undertook the occupation of building tanks, houses, developed the art of sculpture and took the name of Sagara Kamatigaru. As a result of these dispersals they lost their original culture and had to adopt changes suitable to their environment and professions.

The printed pamphlet contains several quotations from scriptures to prove the ancestry of Sagara kula people. It concludes with an exhortation to the caste to follow Dharma and Kulachara and to be loyal to their rulers, Acharyas, etc., and to cultivate knowledge. The most significant point is that they are advised to unite themselves into one unit considering that they were (the several subsections) all from the same ancestor (mythological) and belonged to the kshatriya caste.

Record No. 26**Valmiki Caste**

In a printed pamphlet the Raj Guru narrates the origin and history of the Valmiki mata people. It states that this caste derives its name from their mythological ancestor Valmiki Muni, the author of the epic, Ramayana. The sage Valmiki is said to have performed penance inside an ant hill. In memory of this fact the people of this caste (originally hunters) took to the profession of agriculture and came to be known as Palaygars, Desais, Deshmukhs, Deshpande, Gowda, Nada gowda, Saranada Gowda, etc. Here and there they are sub-divided into several sections and their customs also have undergone changes. Formerly they would not take food from castes below the rank of Gokula, Yadava and Sagara. Now degeneration has set in with the result that they are not following the rules of Dharma and Achara. The pamphlet ends with an exhortation to the people of the caste to follow the principles of Dharma and their caste code and with an assurance that the Rajaguru will visit their settlement and give them his blessings and advice on written request.

Record No. 27

Srimukham issued by the Rajaguru Srinivasa Tholappacharya to the Jambava Caste disciples of Raichur District, Koppal in Nizam's Dominion, dated 5-7-48.

In this Srimukha the swamiji declares that the grant of 64 seers of rice during marriage ceremonies will be inconvenient under conditions prevailing at present and that the two parties may together grant 10 seers (5 each). The Srimukha was issued on the representation by the people of Boodugumpa, Sidlappa Yelaburga Taluk, Koppala Ilaka.

Record No. 28

This file consists of a batch of papers relating to the affairs of Viswa brahmins.

(a) Copy of letter sent to S, Yajamana of Advani by Jagadguru Srimad Yadgiri Hirahalla Matathipati Sriman Mahendra Swami Sannidhi dated 23-10-61. It states : We are till this moment performing the poojas in the mata. Ambaravalli C. has issued a Srimukha that he is the representative (adhikari) of the Panehhapeeta. The Srimukha was printed at the Power Press, Bellary. Our propaganda makes it known that they are not Panchapeetadhikari. Moreover, it is not known who they are. This is to inform you that no kind of help (or convenience) should be given to them. This must be remembered.

(b) Copy of a printed form for membership.

(c) A printed pamphlet containing quotations from various Dharma-sastras stating the conditions under which widows can remarry.

(d) & (e) Printed notices circulated by Chandrasekhara Mata Sannidhi referred to in (a). It mentions the names of the five Pro-genitors of the caste viz., Manu, Maya, Twashtri, Silpi, Viswajna.

True Copy

Bellary,

Dated : 23-7-1962

Record No. 29

From :

M. M. and

P. B., Advocates, Bellary.

To :

- 1 Sri K, son of D, Guduthur.
- 2 Sri O, son of D. T., Guduthur.
- 3 Sri N, son of R, Guduthur.
- 4 Sri R, son of Guduthur H of Hidiginarpla.
- 5 Sri Y, son of Yenkatapalli, G.

Sirs,

We have been duly instructed by our client Pedda C son of L of Hidiginarpla to issue the following notice to you.

1 That our client is a respectable citizen and is an elderly person respected very much in his community for his integrity, honesty and straight forwardness. He is leading a very respectable life throughout his community. When he was invited to the marriage of H at Chellaguriki on 15-7-1962 all of you failed to observe certain customs and also the community advised you not to break any of the customs and to recognise the respective rights of the community heads but you with a view to defying our client and with a view to bringing down his prestige in the eyes of the public and also with ulterior motives necked our client out of the marriage hall and then caused him mental agony, resulting in the loss of prestige and dignity. Our client is a respectable man owning about 100 acres of land most of the community people go to him for his advice and also for using his good offices with regard to all allegations and conflicts. By virtue of your acts, he has been looked down by the public in general and his community people in particular.

2 You are hereby called upon to pay damages of Rs. 2000 within a week from the receipt of this notice by way of compensation. Else, our client will be obliged to file a suit against you all in a court of law in which case you will be held responsible for all costs of our client along with the notice charges of Rs. 20. Our client is giving some of the names who witnessed this occurrence,

- 1
- 2
- 3 • ..
- 4
- 5
- 6

True Copy

In the Court of the Munsiff of Bellary.

Original Suit No. of 1962

Between

Pedda C Plaintiff.

AND

1 K	}	Defendants
2 O		
3 N		
4 R		
5 Y		

Plaint filed on behalf of the plaintiff under Order VIII Rule I of the Civil Procedure Code.

(1) Plaintiff : P. C. son of L aged 60 years, landlord residing at Sidiginarpla, Bellary Taluk.

Address of the plaintiff for service of all notice and process is C/o Sri N. T. B.A., B.L., and Sri P. B. B.A., B.L., Advocates, Bellary.

(2) Defendants : 1 K son of D. major, Hindu, Guduthur.
 2 O son of D major, Hindu, Guduthur.
 3 N son of R major, Hindu, Guduthur.
 4 R son of G Hindu, Sidiginarpla.
 5 Y son of Y Reddy, Hindu, major, Gulyan, Alur Taluk.

(3) The plaintiff is a respectable citizen and is an elderly person respected very much in his community for his integrity, honesty and

straightforwardness. The plaintiff is leading a very respectable life throughout his community since 40 years. The plaintiff is enjoying a high social position in having high esteem in society. Thus the position of the plaintiff is in high esteem in all matters like matrimony and other panchayats in his community.

(4) The plaintiff owns about 100 acres of land. Most of his community people, in almost all the villages, in Bellary Taluk go to him for his advice and also for using his good offices with regard to all customs and conflicts.

(5) On 15-7-1962 plaintiff was invited by the aboye mentioned defendants to attend at a marriage at Chellaguriki, Bellary Taluk; in the house of one Nadippi H. The plaintiff attended the marriage as one of the elder persons of his community and as he was also properly invited.

(6) After the "tali" ceremony was over in the marriage, the defendants failed to observe certain customs and refused to recognise the customary rights of the plaintiff. At that time, the plaintiff who is an elderly man advised all the defendants not to break any of the customs and also to recognise and continue the respective rights of the community heads who were present. The defendants did not heed to the words of plaintiff but with a view to defying the plaintiff and bring down his prestige in the eyes of the public and also with ulterior motives necked out the plaintiff in the marriage hall till the rastha before all the assembled persons in the marriage pandal. Thus the defendants have caused mental agony, resulting in the form of prestige and dignity.

(7) By virtue of the defendants' acts the plaintiff has been looked down by the public in general and his community people in particular. Apart from this, this has caused the plaintiff a good deal of mental worry, anxiety and physical trouble at his old age.

(8) Cause of action for the suit arose on 15-7-1962 at Chellaguriki and on 25-7-1962, the date of notice issued by the plaintiff to defendants within the jurisdiction of this H'ble Court.

(9) The suit is valued at Rs. 510 for purpose of court fee and jurisdiction as detailed in para 10 and a Court fee of Rs. 25 is paid thereon under Sec. 21, Schedule 1, Article I of Mysore Court Fees and Suits Valuation Act.

(10) Particulars of claim

1 Damages caused to plaintiff	Rs. 500.00
2 Notice charges	Rs. 10.00
Total	Rs. 510.00

(11) The plaintiff, therefore, prays for a decree against the defendants (a) for the suit claim, Court costs and further interest and (b) for such other reliefs the court may deem fit in the circumstances of the case.

1. Copy of legal notice dated 23-7-62 in English claiming damages for causing humiliation and loss of prestige to P son of L of Hidi-gunapalle.

2. Copy of plaint filed in the Court of Munsiff of Bellary in English.

3. The case was settled out of the Court by the Raja Guru who was approached and the plaintiffs and defendants withdrew the case from the Court.

Rajguru's decision

The parties should enter into a compromise by collecting the "veelyam" (betel leaves and areca nuts) from all quarters, offer it to Gurusthana and then offer it to the plaintiff and thereafter distribute it to the whole community people assembled there.

Record No. 30

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

To :

Sri Anegundi Kanakagiri Rajaguru,
Sri Srinivasa Tholappacharya Varu, Sannidhanam

21-7-1964

Krodhi—Ashada Shudda 12

The muchalika presented by S B brother of H of Valmiki caste kettemane of Mallapuram village of Gangavathj Anegundi region.

My father's elder brother H and his son B were managing the kattemane of M Valmiki kula, deriving authority from you. It is my fault that I did not go to you and obtain that authority after them. I shall go to you and obtain the authority and shall undertake to carry on the duties of kattemane according to your orders.

Now there are about forty houses of Valmiki Kula people in our village. H wife of our village Pujari H has a daughter by name M aged about twenty years. Her husband H had acquired about twelve acres of land. It is twelve to thirteen years since he died. The said land has been transferred to H. The deceased H's sister has a son by name Y. He wants to marry M on account of the property. M is not willing to marry him. A srimumkham is prayed

for to prevent him from forcibly taking her and to enable her to marry whomsoever she likes.

Sd/- S. B.

The facts represented in the above petition are true and I have approved them.

Left hand thumb impression of
H w/o R H

Witness :

LT of K R

* * * * *

Sri Anegundi Kanakagiri Rajaguru Swamulavari Sannidhanam

The written statement of M daughter of R H of M.

I am not willing to marry my aunt's son Y. He has joined a few others and is threatening that he will beat me, force me, etc., and is making *zoolum*. Frightened by this, I came to you. I pray for your authority to marry the person whom I like and according to my desire. My age is about twenty years.

L T Impression of M

Witnesses :

LT wife of K

This is followed by a joint statement of mother and daughter furnishing the same facts as above.

* * * * *

Sri Kanakachala Prasanna

4-8-1964

Hospet

Sri Varu

Orders (advice) issued to H wife of Pujari H of Valmiki Kula of M village of Anegundi.

The matter conveyed in your petition in regard to your daughter has been considered. According to your statement your daughter M has attained majority. Therefore, it is wrong to get her married to a person whom she is not willing to marry. She may be married to the person whom she wishes to marry.

It is learnt from your petition that Y, M's aunt's son, is giving much trouble to make her marry him. Neither Y nor any person has the right to force her to marry against her wishes. Separate orders have been issued to Y.

Sd/- Sri Tholappacharya

IV COMMENTS ON CASES IN III

Record No. 1

The record furnished information regarding several issues concerning the Dombara caste of Yeraballi village, Harapanahalli Taluk of Bellary district. The issues can be summarised as follows :—

(1) A long standing dispute between two groups, one led by Dombara T and the other by Dombara S. It seems to have culminated in the former having an excommunication notice (*bahiskara patrika*) issued against the latter without the knowledge of the Guru.

(2) The question of readmission of one M into the caste;

(3) The petition (*mahazur*) submitted by the Kattemane to readmit into the caste a family group which had migrated from the village a number of years ago and returned.

(4) Readmission of a caste man who had married an outsider, *i.e.*, a member of a different caste.

The first dispute reveals to a certain extent the procedure that has to be adopted by the contending parties in a dispute under the caste custom. In the decision given by the Rajaguru the plaintiff was reprimanded for communicating the excommunication notice to the respondent in his individual capacity. The proper procedure was for the Kattemane (*Daivamvaru*) to communicate it to the concerned party. No individual member whatever be his position in the group or the justification for his act has the authority to pass an excommunication much less to communicate it. Such authority is vested in the caste council (*Daivamvaru*) which takes action with the tacit or express approval of the Guru. Therefore, the plaintiff had committed a breach of customary law.

The respondent was reprimanded as he did not carry out the decision of the kattemane and paid the release (*bidiki*) fee to the sower instead of the former (*kattemane*). His action was tantamount to contempt of the kattemane. It was, therefore, necessary for the Guru to reprimand the offender so that no member might in future resort to a similar procedure. It is essential for every member of the caste to uphold the authority of the kattemane by abiding by its decisions. Any laxity would lead to a loosening of its authority and of the caste ties. The authority envested in the caste council by custom which owed its origin and growth to the majority of the members of the group, as all customs do, has to be maintained and perpetuated by the members of the caste obeying its decisions.

As a sidelight an interesting fact emerges. He is said to have given a malafide statement, on the advice of M, in a criminal case against one of her caste men. Such an act is detrimental to the well being of the caste group. Every member of a caste is expected to respect the rightful interests of the others. Any act which is against this principle, is a matter to be dealt with by the caste council and the Guru. It was, therefore, necessary for the kattermane as well as the Rajaguru to reprimand the woman.

The second item which called for a decision was the readmission of one M into the caste. He had returned to his village after thirty or forty years of stay outside it. The control exercised by caste on interdining and occupation diminishes considerably with distance. When the migrant returns he has to be subjected to expiatory rites before he resumes his caste status. From the correspondence regarding the question, it would appear that the Guru authorized the kattermane to perform the necessary rites according to their caste custom and after collecting the Guru's fee. However, the accused persons were admitted into the caste in defiance of the Guru's decision. Therefore, the kattermane appealed to the Guru to hold an enquiry and punish them. What is significant here is the tendency on the part of some to ignore and override the opinion of the brahman Guru. Those who resented the interference of the Guru, were, however, bound by tradition to have the customary purificatory rites performed and custom demands that the opinion and advice of the Guru should be respected.

Another notable instance is the petition submitted by the Dombara caste members of Kenchapura village. It is the case of a widow who eloped with a man (in the classificatory relationship of son to her). The affair was regarded as incest, and was, therefore, opposed to caste rules and conventions. The people of Kenchapura sought permission from the Rajguru to ostracise, *i.e.*, excommunicate the pair. Excommunication from the group involves social and religious elimination. The Guru is the competent authority to sanction excommunication from and their readmission into the group.

Record No. 2

The case is important in that the role of the spiritual preceptor is clearly delineated. The incident involves issues of social importance. The man who was charged with having caused the conception of a woman happened to be in the relationship of a fraternal cousin to her husband. Since her husband was alive and levirate is not practised in the caste, the affair was treated as adultery. The important issue involving legal and social position of the child to

be born had to be decided by the Rajaguru on behalf of the community. Since the woman had declared that the conception was not on account of her husband, the legal position could be decided upon without any difficulty. However, the social position of the child could not be so easily determined. She had conceived in adultery. It was not a circumstance under which it was proper to reproduce. The child could not normally have membership in the caste which as a social unit has to extend its support, care and social privileges due to the members of the caste. What could not be had from his caste was not to be expected from other castes in the hierarchy. The Rajaguru as the ultimate authority on spiritual and social matters pertaining to the caste solved the difficulty by assigning the illegitimate child to the care of the Guramata, just as the property of the heirless goes to the State. It was he alone who could fix the membership of the child to be born. The caste council was not empowered to allot membership to any individual recruited otherwise than in socially accepted and approved circumstances.

The position of the woman had to be determined also. Marriage of divorcees and widows is permissible by caste convention. As the spiritual preceptor, the Rajaguru made it incumbent on the members of the kattermane to safeguard the pregnancy of the woman and to ensure her future by removing any obstacles and objections to her marriage if any one offers himself to marry her. The separation of the husband and the divorcee had to be regularized before any of these measures could be adopted for the child and the mother. That was done in the presence of the Rajaguru.

Record No. 3

In this case some important points are brought to light. The first is that an individual has the right of appeal to the Rajaguru against the decision of the kattermane and Daivamvaru. The complainant appealed to the Rajaguru against the decision of the arbitrators. The Rajaguru exercised his authority as the custodian of moral and religious law in setting aside the unwarranted indignity imposed by the kattermane authorities on the offender and his accomplice. Secondly, the caste elders tried to impose their verdict in imitation of the practice said to be in vogue among some higher castes of the region such as the Kshatriya Uppara, Golla and Setti Banijiga. The Dombaras are an itinerant group with the traditional occupation of tight-rope walking, etc. The caste occupies a very low rank among the non-polluting non-brahman castes of Peninsular India. The fact that the caste tried to imitate those above it in the hierarchy in the matter of religious transgression points to a tendency to raise its caste

status. The severity of punishment and the mode adopted to remove pollution should be in conformity with caste tradition and Dharma Sastras. To have the head of a woman shaved as a penalty for social offence implies as extreme act of indignity not contemplated in the Sastras for the Sudras. The Rajaguru declared that 'whoever had done it in the past, it was not proper to do it in the present times'. He, therefore, prescribed the expiation according to the ancient texts.

Record No. 4

The record under review reveals an important point in the procedure adopted by the Rajaguru in dealing with questions relating to transgression of caste rules.

The caste rules permit a married person to seek divorce and there is no restriction imposed on a divorcee marrying again, though in the *udiki form*. The two persons (man and a married woman) concerned in the case, however, tried to bypass caste rules by living together in adultery, and having children without going through the customary procedure of getting freed from the previous matrimonial obligations. In such a case, the husband happens to be the loser for by caste conventions he has the right to collect the Release Fee (*Viduthala shulkam*) from the paramour or the woman who had been his wife. Moreover, the members of the caste through the *kattemane* should be appraised of the status of the woman and her children. Children born in illicit relationship unrecognised by their caste cannot and do not form full-fledged members of the group. They can occupy only an ambiguous position in the caste. But children born of 'udiki' unions, among these castes, inherit a full status similar to those born in wedlock. Hence the anxiety of the *kattemane* Daivachara elders to ensure a legitimacy to the children which could be done only by releasing the woman from her marital obligations. It has to be done with the consent of the husband as well as the community represented by the *kattemane*. In many of these castes, children mean help and possible source of income also. Girls carry bride price which is increasing in proportion to the overall regional economic growth. It is the father or brother of the bride who has the legal claim to the bride price (*oli*). In certain castes an adult girl or divorced sister fetches double the amount. In the case of sons, they are helpmates and at the same time the marriage expenses including the bride price to be paid is the joint responsibility of the parent and brothers. It is, therefore, necessary that the status of every child born in the caste be clearly defined so as to minimise any infringement of the rights and obligations of the

parents as well as their offspring. Hence the consent of the husband is obligatory and the release made final by the offender paying a 'release fee' (viduthala shulkam) to the former. The imposition of the release fee not only frees the woman but makes it possible for her father or brothers to claim the bride price when she is sought in marriage in the udiki form.

Secondly, the man in question, had to give a solemn undertaking to the kattermane and the Rajaguru that he would deal fairly with the children born to him, when the question arises. Thereby, the kattermane and the Rajaguru as the custodians of caste law ensure that justice is meted out to them.

Another interesting fact that emerges is the order of excommunication passed by the Rajaguru on the offender and the communication of the same to the offender's brother. Many of these castes are patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal (as far as practicable). Religious transgression entails pollution not only to the guilty person but to the members of his lineage and to the consanguineous kin. Therefore, the Rajaguru by issuing the copy of the excommunication notice to the brother, restricted the social circle of the offender to the barest minimum in kin space.

The Rajaguru in his correspondence has made it clear that he acted in consultation with the kattermane which is the body empowered by tradition and custom to deal with such transgressions. The Rajaguru as the spiritual authority imposed excommunication for the offence involved both social and religious transgression. He advised in conformity with the caste conventions for a release and 'udiki', thereby, ensuring a stable status to the woman and the children born out of the union. At the same time he made it clear that it was within the purview of the powers of Kattermane to effect the release and impose the udiki.

Record No. 5

The case of S is one of those in which the paternity of a child was contested. The complainant was the child's paternal uncle. The mother of the child married S after her first husband's death. According to the complainant the child (boy) was not born to his brother, while his step-father who belonged to another village was anxious to disclaim any responsibility regarding the paternity or claim of the child of the woman he married. Castemen, caste elders and others of the villages of the first husband, the woman and her partner were all conversant with the details her first marriage, death of that husband, and her living with S, the step-father of the child.

Therefore, three different statements reflecting the moods of the persons giving them were presented to the Rajaguru for deciding the paternity of the child. The statement of the complainant is typical in that he tried his utmost to nullify the claim of the child to the property of his brother. The statements of the Bhoga Setti and others, belonging to the complainant's village were in his favour. But the statements of the kattermane, daivachara and desabhaga of Tekkalakota village (the defendant's village) was definitely in favour of the step-father and the child, thereby, revealing the conflict of interests of the caste councils of two different villages. Where the contestants belong to the same caste, territorial loyalty prevails when political and economic interests are involved. Hence the two kattermane elders chose to make opposing statements in regard to the facts of the case. However, the case was decided by the Rajaguru in favour of the boy, and against his paternal uncle. By his decision, he established irrevocably the paternity and inheritance of the child. This is an instance where the caste council exercised its power to decide the socio-legal status of one of its members and proving its utility as an informal court of Law presided over by the spiritual guru of the caste.

Record No. 6

The record is interesting in that it represents an instance in which the traditional caste council takes on an urban trait by being registered as an organized body with office bearers such as president, vice-president and secretary. Since a body constituted thus with very imposing office-bearers would not command the respect and obedience of the tradition bound castemen, the Governing Body had to turn to the age-old institution of the Gurupeeta and obtain its permission and sanction to function as the caste council under a new form. Thus an effective compromise was struck between tradition and modernity, the link being supplied by the progressive minded spiritual preceptor of the caste. A rather amusing sidelight is presented by the multiplicity of office bearers such as Presidents. In rural communities the words 'president' and 'vice-president' are highly endowed with prestige value. In all likelihood, the members of the caste council would not sacrifice their prestige as 'kula mukhyastaru' by being doubted as members. So there had to be four president, two vice-presidents. Every member who claimed any status in the local community had to be a member. The simple traditional caste council consisting of a Yajamana, Buddhivanta and three others of the panchayats had, in keeping with the urbanization of the institution swollen into a Governing Body with four presidents, two vice-presidents, one secretary and thirteen members. Yet the Government

Body with all its impressive size sought a Srimukha from the Rajaguru to confer validity and to ensure support from its castemen. This is an illustration that caste as a socio-religious phenomenon draws its inspiration from religion and religious institutions.

Record No. 7

This is a case in which interested mischief-mongers write pseudonymous petitions creating differences and dissensions between two kattermanes; the latter were made to meet at Sri Rajaguru's court and the whole thing was proved to be false the differences being resolved.

What is significant, however, is the factor that the allegations, irrespective of their veracity, indicate the trend of affairs settled by these caste councils. The case of E is interesting; (1) that she was given in udiki marriage without having been released from her first marriage which is a transgression against the accepted caste code; (2) she lived a kind of life which was not in conformity with her caste code. Her parents were placed under a social ban (bahishkara). A social ban is both a restrictive and a punitive measure imposed by the group on the family of the offender. It is restrictive as the woman has contacted pollution by her relationship with a man from a lower caste, and punitive as it prohibits the members from having normal social contact with their fellow castemen and thereby effectively inconveniencing and disabling their routine activities. Being under a ban is an overt loss of face, and in tiny groups loss of prestige is tantamount to social death. The ameliorative effect is that it brings the members speedily to remedy their faults by seeking purification (suddhata). The caste council empowered to purify, does it, thereby bringing the offender to his senses.

The process of the ban is indicated by the kattermane authority issuing the notice of ban to other hamlets and asking the kattermane to see, that it is imposed. The aim of the writer of the pseudonymous letters seems to be to bring about a rift in the relationship of the interlinked kattermanes and to loosen the concerted control exerted by these bodies in cases like that of Eramma. Here again the role of the Rajaguru is made clear. He made the necessary enquiries from all the parties concerned, collected statements and gave his decision, on which the two kattermanes gave an undertaking to dissolve their differences and work in unison. Harmony was restored and unhealthy elements were effectively deterred from creating mischief which eventually might have led to the relaxation of control by the kattermane over the members of the Valmiki caste of the locality.

Record No. 8

The Plaintiff in the case is stated to have been beaten with a shoe by the defendant. The enquiry proved it. The circumstances that led to the appeal against the decision of the Anantasayanam Gudi Kattemane are not available from the record. The main point of dispute seems to be the defendant's claim that he did beat the plaintiff but he did it in the course of a fight. The significance of the claim for redress lies in the fact that it was not the physical injury that counted so much as the damage to the prestige and position of the victim in his group, combined with the pollution (purely religious in content) incurred by him. The Rajaguru in his Memorandum refers to the shoe as an 'undesirable weapon' implying, thereby, that the injury caused by wielding this otherwise practically harmless and ready-at-hand weapon is in the realm of the intangible. The victim loses his face amongst his immediate kin and neighbours. Therefore, it is a serious crime from a social point of view. It is embarrassing as well as inconvenient for the victim, as a Hindu, has to perform expiatory (prayaschitta) rites to rid himself of the pollution incurred by his body (excepting his feet, of course) coming in contact with the polluting object. Even if a malicious rumour is set afloat by one person claiming that he has wielded this weapon against his opponent, the latter is necessitated to make all efforts to deny the claim with proof and where it is not possible to undergo expiation to rid himself of 'slander fault' (apavada dosha).

In this particular instance it is quite likely that the community elders either did not impose punishment according to custom to both the offender and the victim or gave a one-sided judgment. The Rajaguru made the customary enquiries and obtained sworn statements from the persons concerned with the incident. It was a significant fact that three persons quoted by the defendant as his witnesses, seem to have been lukewarm in their affirmations when faced with the necessity of giving sworn statements in the presence of their Guru. The plaintiff, however, accepted it, though it might have been to his advantage to deny it. The plaintiff did so, most probably because the presence of the Guru was an impelling force to speak the truth.

The offence being of a socio-religious character, the expiation also comprised of two levels, namely, the societal and the religious. The imbalance caused by the offence in societal standards was set right by the offender offering 'fault penalty', (aparadha thambula) to the Daivamvaru, Yajamana and others. By doing so, the offender admitted his fault and accepted the punishment. By taking the 'tirtha prasad' (water offering) the pollution was removed. The offender

and his victim was treated with equal consideration. The offender had transgressed convention by wielding an 'undesirable weapon' to the witnesses who were punished as a deterrent for giving false evidence.

(Note : Falling at the feet of one's opponent is shameful and cowardly. To be beaten with a foot-wear is much worse and to be beaten with an old and worn-out shoe or chappal is worst. On the other hand, devotion to God or Guru or elders is expressed by worship of His feet and touching the feet. It expresses extreme humanity to the point of self-elimination which is not required or desirable in the case of equals or inferiors or even superiors).

Record No. 9

The record presents a case where a man belonging to a caste with a superior status (Boya) had sexual relations with a woman of a polluting caste (Madiga). His father and brother were also kept under a ban. The punishment seems to have compelled the offender to seek the removal of the ban and readmission into the caste. The latter required purification and also acceptance by the castemen of other villages in the locality. A certificate of purification (sudha patrika) is the overall guarantee given by the religious head as the spiritual leader of the entire caste of the region that the offence has been condoned and pollution removed. It was, therefore, necessary for the caste council to take the matter to the Rajaguru. The amount of the fines imposed on the offender and his brother determines the degree of fault (aparada). A sum of Rs. 58 was levied on the offender but only Rs. 10 on the brother. The latter's fault is only an extension of the formers. Members of one family share equally the responsibility for the maintenance of customary law and the accepted standards of the group. The father and brother incurred aparada (fault) by having failed to stop the offender from committing the offence. Therefore, they were made accessories to the offence.

Record No. 10

The case deals with the question of division of properties among the members of a joint family. Three different issues had to be decided by the Rajaguru. (1) Whether the first defendant who by his conduct had forfeited his right of inheritance should be considered for his portion or no thin? (2) The adoption of a child—totally unrelated to the family should be considered for a share in the division of the joint property. (3) When one appropriates the property of a totally unrelated person, does the joint family have an overall right over it, in case of division of ancestral property?

The issues involved pertain to legal as well as customary law. For instance 'bad', i.e., unprecedented and unacceptable conduct

of the first defendant (who was having a multitude of mistresses and, therefore, behaved in contravention of the caste custom) throws him out of the customary law for any consideration in the division of the ancestral property. By being outside the pale of caste, he perforce loses his rights and privileges as a member of the caste. Moreover, his conduct had a direct effect on his immediate kin who were the caste elders (kattemane golla). They lost their status in the community and also the income attached to it in the form of honours (mariyada paid to kattemane elders). Legally, however, caste and inheritance are not concomitant but customary law can debar an outcaste from inheritance. Thus a compromise had to be struck by the Rajaguru between the two (statutory law and customary law). It was done with the simple expedient of purify the offender sanctioning readmission and thereby restoring his caste status.

The second issue, though unrelated to the first, also involved legal ownership and rights over property. The third defendant in the case had appropriated the property belonging to one HBG who was not a member of the lineage. At the same time he adopted a boy. Since the adoption, most probably was not done with the consent of all the claimants, there was controversy regarding the claim of the adopted son to a share in the joint property. The controversy was settled by pooling the property acquired by the third defendant from an outside source and the ancestral property and permitting the claim of the adopted member to a share. There was no loss in the individual shares. Justice had to be maintained. The interests of the two sisters of HBG whose property was amalgamated were met by giving them cash, sheep and other valuables to facilitate their marriages. Even a concubine of the first defendant was not denied a share. She was given cash for her maintenance.

The kattemane, thus, acted as the guarantor of social justice to members who were by means beyond their control deprived of their rightful share. It also dispensed equitable justice to those concerned in the case.

Record No. 11

The record is incomplete. The salient feature of the complaint is that the harassed woman seeks the help of the caste council against the intermediary who arranged for her marriage.

Record No. 12

The case deals with the question of inter-marriage between two sects of the same caste, namely, the Potter caste. The caste, by itself, occupies one of the lower ranks in the local hierarchy. Inter-

marriages between the different sects of the same caste were also prohibited and an occurrence was tantamount to pollution and entailed social ban on the parties concerned. Udiki marriages, amongst these castes, are not negotiated by caste intermediaries and kattermane people. Hence the applicant's father could marry a woman belonging to the Lal Kummara (red potter) sect. Marriage, however, does not confer membership in the caste groups. The woman was not allowed to participate in any socio-religious function in any house. She was, however, assigned the role of an outsider. Her son was, however, anxious to regain his status in the community. Therefore, he appealed to the kattermane who agreed to give him the status of a full-fledged member on his obtaining a 'suddha patrika' (decree of purification) from the Rajaguru. This decree was necessary to make it possible for his family to participate in social functions and community feasts without any social restrictions. Every member who had been placed under a ban by the caste has to give a community feast. The participation of his castemen in a feast given by any individual is the guarantee he is a member of the caste. That is why the applicant undertook to give a communal feast.

It is noteworthy that the initial power to sanction or withhold permission for readmission lies with the caste council. The Guru is required to remove the pollution incurred by intersect marriage in this case through purification rites. He is a religious functionary and without the 'shudda patrika' social observances could not be implemented by the kattermane.

Record No. 13

This relates to one of the typical cases decided by the Rajaguru. It is important in that it indicates the procedural details involved in the scrutiny and disposal of cases. It is also of political value for it contains the definition and essentials of a kattermane. It is one of those instances where the disputants failed to obtain justice from a Court of Law. They had to withdraw the case and place it before the Rajaguru whose decision seemed to have satisfied all the parties concerned.

The dispute arose in regard to the customary honours due to the caste 'kattermane'. The disputants belonged to the Jambava kula (Harijans). The Rajaguru decided the case on the strength of written documents, sworn statements, copies of records from the Taluk office, and a bronze plate alleged to have been granted by 'Delhi Badshah' in the year Salivahana sakabdam 780 (A.D. 858). His

Judgment shows that the case was examined thoroughly from the records and evidence made available to him by the parties. A sense of fairness and sagacity characterizes the judgement which was based not only on tradition but history, documentary evidence and precedents as found in the records of the Guru Peetah.

The customary honours (mariyada) enjoyed by the members of a kattermane are both in cash and kind. The ownership of a kattermane, therefore, carried with it political and social advantages. It is evident from the records that whenever there was a dispute regarding the ownership of a kattermane and a case filed in the law court, it was the government who took over the control.

The Rajaguru explains clearly the correctness of the procedure adopted by the plaintiff in referring the case to Guru Simhasana for arbitration. He says that 'the institution of Gurus exists for the safeguarding of Dharma Sasana. Kattermane is related to caste and creed and, therefore, falls within the purview of Dharma Sasana. It is not governed by any of the three categories of Governmental Laws (Raja Sasana). It is this Simhasana which holds the position of Guru (Samayacharya Guruthwa Hakku) and has, therefore, the power to enquire and decide issues relating to the affairs of kattermane which is concerned with caste and creed'. This explanation of the Rajaguru details the traditional links between the religious institutions and the castes which seek their blessings and ministrations. Religious institutions preserve the ideals and tenets of religion and help institutions like the kattermane to safeguard the social interests of the group it serves.

The record sets forth clearly the nature and composition and function of a kattermane. The institution of kattermane is defined with reference to space and scope. Its jurisdiction is related approximately to the 'fiscal firka' of revenue divisions. It is mostly located in the headquarters or a prominent place within its jurisdiction. The ownership of a kattermane appears to be hereditary and held by virtue of a political right. The chiefs and kings granted ownership of these kattermanes to deserving persons of the caste through grants. The defendants in this case produced a bronze plate grant of 858 A.D. as evidence of their right of ownership over Koppala kattermane. Apart from the question of its genuineness, it bears testimony to the antiquity of the institution. It is also evident that the Moslem rulers of the region regarded the question as one that required the decision of a superior official of the State such as the Dewan (whose rank was that of a Governor of a region).

Indian villagers believe tradition to be infallible proof. Members of the Davaragiri and Kushtigi Kattemanes gave written statements that the rightful owner of the Koppala kattermane was the Plaintiff. These kattemanes exercised authority over 130 and 133 hamlets respectively and they were of equal status with the Koppala kattermane. Their evidence imparted immense weight in favour of the Plaintiff, because they were supposed to know about the traditional ownership of a neighbouring kattermane. A kattermane cannot exist and function as an isolated organization. It has to be recognised and its authority respected and upheld by the other institutions of the same kind in the neighbouring areas whose effective cooperation is needed in the matter of enforcing certain social penalties like excommunication from caste.

Record No. 14

This is a case of illegitimate conception of an unmarried girl of the Valmiki caste (Bedar). The kattermane could not take action owing to the internal dissensions in the group. One of these parties lodged the complaint with the Rajaguru. The offence was moral delinquency involving social consequences. The accused girl confessed her guilt in a sworn statement made before the Rajaguru. The latter had the matter investigated by the kattermane (Daivamvaru) in accordance with the customary procedure. The caste elders constitute the agency authorized by tradition to enforce the penalties imposed by the Rajaguru. With the consent of the kattermane, the Rajaguru decided that no attempt to get rid of the pregnancy should be attempted by the girl or her parents. Such an act would involve the sin of killing a child, which is one of the most heinous sins according to Dharma sastras. To acquiesce in or overlook the act of wilful abortion is tantamount to indirect encouragement of such acts with all the dangerous consequences attended on it. It is the duty of social institutions like the kattermane and much more of the religious institution of the Guru to prevent such acts which infringe legal as well as moral codes. It was the responsibility of group elders to see that the woman suffered no harm or social disabilities and thus ensure psychological protection to her and her parents. With his characteristic sagacity, the Rajaguru gave his decision by which the physical and mental care of the girl was entrusted to the group elders. He also declared that no stigma would be attached to anyone desiring to marry the girl either before or after the birth of the child. Thus her future status was also safeguarded. The caste council though a chastiser can also be a rescuer and a guarantee against the onslaught of unsympathetic public.

Record No. 15

The decision given by the Rajaguru on this case is self-explanatory. The important fact borne out by the record is that no marriage can be contracted or annulled without the specific consent of the caste as represented by the kattermane. Marriage is a social event through which society regulates the sex life of its members and also the status and membership of the children born of it. It is an essential prerequisite of societal continuity and for the perpetuation of group-values family life should be carried on in conformity with the traditions of the group concerned. In India where the Hindu social structure is based on caste which is a by-product of religion, the social behaviour of the members of each caste is controlled by the caste organizations wherever they exist and by the religious institutions.

The case under reference involved three offences. Firstly, the husband failed to give a fair chance to his wife by sending her away to her parents when she was ill and not in a position to fulfil her role as wife. He did not divorce (bidiki) her with the consent of the kattermane, thus depriving her of the option to remarry. Secondly, he was contemplating 'udiki' marriage with another girl without informing the kattermane. Thirdly, the girl sought in 'udiki' marriage had already been betrothed to another man and there was no formal annulment of the betrothal by the parties.

The kattermane as the guardian of the group's moral values is bound to protect the material and moral interest of all its members. If a girl is discarded by her husband, without sufficient reason and recompense there results a maladjustment in the set up. Steady families are the props of custom and tradition. Again, it was a flagrant flouting of convention that the man did not get the consent of the kattermane before discarding his wife. Subsequent enquiry proved that the girl had failed in her duties because of ill-health and not of wantonness. As a husband it was his duty to provide medical treatment and afford her a chance for recovery. His contemplation of marrying a girl whose first betrothal had not been annulled was regarded by them as a more serious offence from a societal point of view. Such an act would undermine the value of convention and custom. It would affect three parties, namely, the wife who would be deprived of her legitimate compensation; the man to whom the girl had been betrothed would be deprived of the guarantee given to him by the contract; the kattermane would lose its control over parties contracting marriages if they were broken at the whims of the persons concerned. The Rajaguru decided that the matter should

be postponed for six months so that the behaviour of the parties (husband and wife) may be watched and investigated. Meanwhile, the manner in which the couple should behave was prescribed and an undertaking that they would follow it was obtained from them. Assurance was also given that the husband and wife would live amicably and that arrangements would be made to give treatment to the wife for the restoration of her health. The principal aim of the Rajaguru in making these decisions was, as expressed by him, to give an opportunity to the couple gradually to develop mutual love. Tact and sagacity characterize this decision which was meant to stabilize social values and conventional behaviour of individuals in a caste group.

Record No. 16

Several points of sociological interest emerge from an analysis of this record. The first is that a husband has absolute right to give the consent for the divorce to marry again and this is done by his giving a release bond (biduthala patram) and taking back the tali (the symbol tied by the husband at the time of marriage). So long as the symbol remains with the woman she is legally the wife. The removal of the tali (as the tying of it) is of social significance and, therefore, has to be performed in the presence and with the consent of the kattermane authorities. No woman can be married in udiki fashion until and unless the decree of release is given by the kattermane. If it is done, the act is considered tantamount to adultery. It is also in the interest of the husband as the legal owner of the woman to insist on the release being executed before the kattermane. In these castes the custom of bride price (oil) persists. The husband is entitled to get back his bride price, the symbol tali (which is often made of gold) and any other ornament or articles presented by him at the time of marriage. Therefore, the complainant filed the case for the 'udiki' marriage was performed by the brother of the woman without the knowledge of the husband or the kattermane.

Secondly, the kattermane expressed its feelings in unequivocal terms. It condemned the act of the brother and the man who married the woman in 'udiki' form as a contravention of Dharma. Custom and convention are equated with concepts of right and wrong. Any wrong act is an act of 'adharma'. The act of the brother in giving his sister in udiki marriage without obtaining the release bond is unethical: for he intended to deprive the husband of his conventional rights, the kattermane of its customary honours and tried to appropriate to himself the bride price obtained from the second party.

Therefore he had transgressed the laws and convention of the society.

It is interesting to note that these castes, ranked low in the local caste hierarchy take steps to guarantee the interests of all parties in a contract. The bride price for a girl married as a virgin is Rs. 101 (by convention) but for a divorcee (udiki) it is double the amount. It is because by the time the woman seeks a release and udiki marriage she is often a full-grown one and valuable as a help in agricultural labour. The bride price is in some dim manner, proportionate to the economic utility of the woman as a helpmate.

The record also reveals the trend that is creeping into these societies. The brother of the woman had a notice published in a local daily newspaper demanding compensation for maintaining his sister. It is characteristically urban and modern. But the husband, with the wily wisdom of a villager waited till the marriage took place and then appealed to the Guru and the kattermane for redress. He was certain that the latter would rally to his aid and it did. None of the parties found courage to flout its authority. Each one of them received his due share of justice and customary law was honoured and upheld.

Record No. 17

Hinduism has been described as a non-proselytising religion rigid in its tenets and dogmas. In practice, however, it is not so. The present record represents one of those instances where readmission to Hindu-fold can be done with the sanction and authority of the Guru (spiritual preceptor). Srivaishnavaites had always accepted conversion and readmission into its fold. But readmission into Hindu faith is always a return to the original caste of the individual or group seeking it. It restores the original caste status but not a higher one. Ranking is one of the fundamental principles of caste system and no attempt is made by the act of readmission to disturb the structure. It is noteworthy that the Harijan girl was adopted by a Harijan. It is as a Harijan that she was readmitted into the Hindu fold, as a disciple of Ramanuja matha and a member of the Harijan caste. The benefit of initiation (Chakrankana) is extended to all disciples of Ramanuja irrespective of caste. By "chakrankana" the sin incurred by the girl as a member of an alien faith is removed and she was admitted into the Ramanuja matha. The initiation and the formal admission were desired urgently by her foster father so that there might be no impediment to her marriage. To complete the process she was given a new name also. The religious institution caters to the welfare of its disciples by extending the facility of readmission by a simple expedient of chakrankana

Such an expedient is essential for the continuity of the caste as a member of the Hindu caste structure and also for the perpetuation of an institution which by its authority can admit even prodigals.

Record No. 18

The case presents one of the instances where the caste council indulged in corruption. It imposed a fine on a man who attended the marriage at a house whose members were supposed to be under some unknown 'fault' (tappu). Neither the accused nor his accusers could explain the fault. Four persons were placed under social ban, three of whom were freed of it later. The complainant believed his brother and paid Rs. 75 as 'fault penalty' (tappu dandam) to the kattemane. It did not, however, restore his status in the caste for his sister's husband and his brother conducted the marriage of their son and daughter excluding him. In Hindu society where the reference centre in regard to kin rights and obligations is the caste, expiation is a concept which is not only meaningful but socially necessary. Until the fault is declared as expiated by the kattemane which is supposed to be the conscience of the caste, the individual cannot regain his status nor claim his rights and privileges as a functioning member of the group. Such a position entails loss of status as well as face in these small rural communities. It is virtually a social death. The social and religious life of an individual is bound up with his caste relationship.

The evidence proved that the kattemane with the connivance of the complainant's brother had acted unjustly. While it could excuse three others of the same fault, it failed to do so for the fourth even after accepting the penalty. The statement of Kondikara E reveals the feeling that the poorer section of the caste have towards the kattemane authority. In the hamlet of kolagallu there were eight houses of Uppara caste of which five belonged to the kattemane of Daroji. The jurisdiction of kattemane is specially circumscribed and when members of one kattemane migrate to villages falling within the geographic limits of another kattemane, they retain the membership of the parent council. Kondikara E who was not a member of Daroji kattemane could criticize its action severely. He said, 'whatever it may be it is wrong on the part of the kattemane to collect money and further accuse H and prevent him from attending marriages. They (meaning the kattemane) may be great persons but what they did was injustice. Even if we are small people (meaning poor) we have consented to manage our affairs with the four persons of Kolagallu'.

The decision arrived at by the Rajaguru admonished the kattermane. He received a sworn statement from a caste member aged 70 regarding the nature of the fault which the family of A and H had been ostracised by the kattermane of Daroji. The fault was allegedly one of 'servi sambandam' (meaning living together) and not a socially approved marriage. But the witness had repudiated it by stating that the family had been permitted to do 'bhuma' and 'suragi' rites which are prohibited to 'servi sambandam' couple. The statement needs elucidation. 'Bhuma' is a rite performed during marriage. Every married couple of the same caste has to participate in it. The rite consists in the contracting parties providing a fixed amount of rice, pulses, clarified butter and molasses out of which sweet cakes (called poli) and cooked rice are prepared. Before sitting down to the ritual feast, each couple has to bow down to the Daivachara elders, pay them a small fee who in turn place a mark on their foreheads and tie a piece of string (called kankanam) round their right wrists. Any person who had been placed under a social ban (bahishkara), one who had served a term in penitentiary or physically handicapped (lame, blind, epileptic or even a squint), or paid a penalty fee (tappu dandam) or has married by the udiki form (remarriage of widow or divorcee) is not permitted to participate in the ritual feast (bhuma utta). The string tied by the kattermane and the mark placed on the forehead signify the purity of the parties. In these communities, it is the earnest hope and desire of every member to be a honoured participant in a 'bhuma utta'. A family which has participated in this function cannot therefore be branded as ineligible for social considerations. Even if the family had been subjected to any social ban, the kattermane was acting unjustly in withholding the readmission of the complainant for he had paid the fault penalty' (tappu dandam) as desired by them. The motive was malafide.

The Rajaguru admonished the kattermane and reminded it of its responsibility. As the traditional court it is expected to conduct the caste affairs with justice and according to Dharmā. He, as the final authority on matters relating to social ban, and readmission ruled out their decision and decided unequivocally that nobody had any authority to impose a ban on the complainant.

Record No. 19

The case is significant in many points. (1) Betrothal of a girl is a social function carried out in the presence of the Daivachara (caste council) and the relatives. The contract is marked by presenting betel leaves and arecanuts by both the parties to the assembly. Breaking of the contract has also to be done in public. Contrary to

the established custom, the first defendant in the case broke the contract and promised his daughter in marriage to a second party. It was a breach of promise. (2) Any issue involving customary usage or caste convention had to be decided by or in the presence of the caste council. It was, therefore, necessary for the Rajaguru to send notices of the complaint to the two caste councils of the plaintiff and the defendants. (3) The Rajaguru in his decision outlines the circumstances which prompted him to make enquiries regarding the complaint. He makes it clear that such violations as have been mentioned in the plaint fall within his jurisdiction. What is important is the enunciation of the basic idea underlying the entire structure of the caste and the institution of the Guru. 'Just as the Laws enacted by the Government, the Laws of Dharma are established with the consent of society. People should conduct themselves according to these laws (Dharma). Morality (*niti*) and acts of self-control (*niyama*) are all included in the Laws of Raja Dharma. It is our policy (or method) to scrutinize and judge cases with reference to these laws.' The act of ignoring the common procedure and the adoption of an extraordinary procedure is a fit subject for enquiry and judgment. Unusual procedure on the part of individuals unnoticed and unchecked will eventually lead to disruption of established institutions. It is, therefore, the duty of Rajaguru as the agent of the institution of social control to enquire and decide on incidents which are of a disruptive nature. (4) The statement of the Sanganakallu caste council outlines the caste conventions regarding betrothal and where the defendant had defaulted. The defendants, had, however, consistently acted against the traditions of the Sagara caste. Their flagrant transgressions were, as a warning, were communicated by the *kattemane* to the *Daivachara* and *Desa Bhaga* of Kanekallu which was the regional body.

(5) A scrutiny of the record reveals an interesting trend in the caste. The caste council of Sanganakallu as a collective and sophisticated body refers to its caste as Sagara caste (a name derived from the mythological king, Sagara who was responsible for the digging of ocean-sagara). Individuals of the caste, however, refer themselves as Uppara so and so. The caste is generally denoted in the region by the term 'uppara' connotative of its traditional occupation of selling salt (*uppu*=salt). Adoption of names of Sanskrit origin seems to be considered as one of the essentials necessary for raising the status of a caste. The caste elders with the sanction of the Guru, as could be seen from a printed pamphlet published by the latter, refer to their caste as Sagara. Change leading to betterment in group status can be achieved in Hindu society only through institutionalized

agencies such as the Guru Peetam. Awarding of a mythological ancestry to these castes becomes authentic and unquestionable when the Guru advocates the cause with references from the ancient Puranas. Sagara being the progenitor of the uppara caste would not in any manner upset the balance of caste structure of the region. On the contrary, it imparts prestige and sense of belongingness to these castes with the so called upper castes of the region. Nothing is lost but much is gained in the way of social consciousness and prestige. The Brahmin Guru has played his vital role as an agent of change within the framework of traditional structure to afford a slightly improved status and prestige to the caste.

Record No. 20

The case is a simple one in which the person concerned appeals to the Rajaguru to have the social stigma attached to him on account of his mother's udiki marriage removed. As discussed elsewhere the children born out of an udiki marriage though legally equal are yet ritually inferior to those born of the marriage of a virgin and a bachelor. It is a compromise between the local, non-Sanskritic sanction of widow and divorce marriage and the forms of marriage advocated in Sanskritic codes. In ritual, therefore, only the sons of a regular marriage can participate. The reaction of the caste to the ideas and values of the higher castes of the region is clearly manifested by its allotting a higher ritual status to the wives and children of a regular marriage. It is, however, noteworthy that in the Karnataka the dominant caste is the Lingayats, which countenances widow and divorce marriage (udiki). Yet the Brahmanical values seem to have seeped into the Potter Caste (occupies a low status in caste hierarchy) and influenced its ritual and social behaviour. It could be owing to its allegiance to a Brahman guru, empowered by the State to direct and conduct its affairs. The Rajaguru as the competent authority to remove the stigma issued a Srimukham by which the ban imposed on the man and his family was lifted. The expunging of the ban imposed on the grandfather freed the granddaughters and removed the possible obstacles that might be placed by the caste at the time of their marriage.

Record No. 21

An unauthorized notice of excommunication (bahishkara patra) was issued on a woman who had quarrelled with another. The notice, contrary to custom, was printed and circulated. It is an instance of the corruption of arbitrators. Villagers are normally suspicious of any written document (owing probably to their illiteracy combined with

the fact that unscrupulous village accountants and middle men had contrived to deceive and deprive many of them by forged documents). So a printed notice of excommunication was a serious affair. The Kattemane, though powerful within the caste, is puerile when public notice is made of its affairs. The Rajaguru, on the other hand, is endowed with extensive authority by virtue of his position as the spiritual preceptor of the whole caste and several other higher castes of the region and also as a member of the highest castes venerated for his learning and knowledge of sacred scriptures. (He is also a wealthy man). Therefore, he counteracted the malicious propaganda by issuing a notice of warning to the author of the incriminatory document. With his characteristic wisdom he points out that at the present time, it is not so easy to keep out a person from the community (samajam). He brings home to them the changed conditions where quarrels if necessary have to be settled by a Court of Law and that no individual has the authority to take law into his own hands. By this admonition he tries to make it clear to them legal implications involved in their act of having an excommunication notice printed and circulated. His decision to set aside the notice followed the favourable opinion of the Daivachara. Considerations of logic opinion of the kattemane, recognition and acceptance of the trends have been pooled to arrived at the decision.

Record No. 22

The complaint is with regard to inheritance of woman who had left her husband, lived in adultery with a man of a different caste, borne children to him and claimed a share in the property of the husband. To settle a question such as this, the Rajaguru had to fall back up on the statements of various persons in the villages of the plaintiff and the defendants. The categories of persons (listed below) whose testimony was considered irreproachable and authentic present an interesting sidlight in the village organization.

(a) A petition was submitted by the Daivachar (kattemane) people of Hire Jantakal, the village of the plaintiff testifying to the fact that the defendant was a woman of loose morals and did not live with the plaintiff for more than 13 years.

(b) Oral statements of the kattemane gouda and kondikara.

(c) Oral statement of the Reddy and Karnam of H J.

(d) Oral statement of important persons of H J.

(e) Oral statement of the village officers of S, the defendant's village.

- (f) Oral statement of the defendant's maternal uncle.
- (g) Oral statements of the important people of 'Sagara' kula.
- (h) Oral statement of the Reddy of S village.
- (i) Oral statement of the Achar.

Evidence is necessary for a caste council, or the Rajaguru to ascertain the truth as much as it is for a Court of Law. In these rural communities, an oral statement given in the presence of the guru (who is the spiritual preceptor) is equal to if not more than a sworn statement in a Court of Law. Responsible persons such as the kattermane people of the villages of the plaintiff and defendants were the most authentic source of information regarding the facts of the complaint and the activities of the contending parties.

Second in importance was the statement given by the Reddy and Karnam of the two villages. Reddy is the village headman while the 'Karnam' is the village accountant. These two are administrative officials whose authority and jurisdiction extend beyond those of the caste councils of individual castes. Unlike the latter, they might possess written documents also to support their statements. They are, by far, the most responsible village officers and therefore their evidence is very valuable.

A third source of evidence was provided by some important persons of the two villages. The dispute extended beyond the purview of the caste organization for it involved property and inheritance. As neighbour participants in economic activities, friends and co-residents of the village, these persons had an interest in the settlement of the dispute. In this case where the arbitrator was the supreme religious head of several castes of the region, the evidence furnished by the witnesses would not normally be influenced by considerations of friendship or caste loyalty. Moreover, these persons are expected to have the interest of the local community in their minds while giving the statements. There is minimum chance of tutoring them. The village arbitrator cannot and will not ignore public opinion.

The fourth one is the evidence furnished by the maternal uncle of the defendant. Reputation of an individual is not an isolated factor in the social sphere. It is the immediate concern of the kin. In rural India the concern extends far beyond the kin units, to the caste itself and faintly to the whole area of his social contacts. Maternal uncle in South India (in the whole of the country) is in a special manner, the guardian of the reputation of the maternal kin. Therefore,

no uncle would miss any chance to safeguard the reputation of his family. Thus the evidence furnished by the maternal uncle of the defendant assumes special significance in this case. It is a by-play in the conflict between loyalties of kin and truth. It is a trump card wielded by the Rajaguru to secure a gain over any probable objection from the defendant's side.

The last statement that is of the 'achar' is of importance for it is from the religious functionary in the village and a representative of the Rajaguru. A person's caste and position in the village play an important part in evaluating the truth of his evidence. An 'Achar' (abbreviated form of Acharya=teacher) is a Brahman. He is the religious official and thereby is not ordinarily expected to have any vested interest in doctoring evidence. As such his evidence is of great importance.

The case gives a panoramic view of the informal courts of justice administered by the caste councils and an arbitrator such as the Rajaguru and the procedure adopted by them to ensure that equitable justice is provided. It also shows how far these rural groups use their indigenous traditional system in regulating social behaviour. These informal bodies were intended to maintain the ideals of justice backed by the religious and moral authority of the Rajaguru.

Record No. 23

The case bears no special interest except that the decision made by the Rajaguru confirmed the declaration of the caste council (Daivamvaru). The complainant first made false allegations against his wife but withdrew them later. His earlier action most probably brought upon him the social stigma. It might have been intended to ensure better behaviour by the woman. Whatever it was, he hastened to request the Rajaguru to grant a Srimukham to the effect that there was nothing unusual in his family relations by United families contribute to the cohesiveness of caste and the social structure. The spiritual preceptor as the wise man hastened to solder the ruptured familiarities. His efforts seem to have been augmented by the 'Daivamvaru'.

Record No. 24

The case provides an example where interested persons or parties try to foment dissensions in the caste. The cause of complaint was that the wife of one of the petitioners was not allowed to participate in socio-religious functions in the houses of her castemen. Her family was branded for an allegedly but unknown fault for three ascending generations. The ban running for six decades and no one knew what the exact transgression was or why the ban was imposed. The family had

inherited the stigma. The caste was divided into two camps—most probably the traditionalists who insisted upon the continuance of the ban and the reactionaries who wanted to forget it and admit the woman to her legitimate rights as a member of the caste. The record does not contain any details regarding it. There were sixty families in the village of whom sixteen were in the opposite camp. For some reason not mentioned in the record, the Uppara caste members of the village desired a re-unification. It could be done only by the Rajaguru who was the authority to expunge the stigma, if there had been any and restore the ritual status of the woman in the caste. Accordingly, the fault was declared null and void as no evidence was produced by any party proving the fault of the woman's grandfather who was the subject of the ban. The customary purificatory rites had to be performed before readmission. Expiation was necessary for the 'sin of fault' (aparada dosha). But in the case of slander sin (apavada dosha) a slur even if it is cast unwittingly imperils the social status of an individual. It can be removed and the status restored by expiation which in the religion oriented caste system is a social necessity.

The judgement as well as the mode of communication is very urban. A notice date 17-6-1953 embodying the decision of the Rajaguru was printed and circulated among the members of the caste.

(Records 24, 5 & 4 relate to the same case).

Record No. 25

The record is very valuable from a sociological point of view. It is one of the recorded attempts of a caste with a lower rank in the hierarchy to raise its status with the approval and advice of a Brahman guru. The caste in question is generally known as the Uppara (meaning salt vendors). It assumes the Sanskritic name Sagara (of the ocean) and claims descent from the mythological ancestor Sagara Chakravarti of the Ikshvaku dynasty and a Kshatriya. The Sagara kua, therefore, is of the Kshatriya varna. It is worthy of note that when a caste claims itself to be a Kshatriya or a Vaishya, not much resentment or antagonism is expressed by the other castes of the village or the region. 'It is interesting to note that the mobility of a caste is frequently stated in varna terms rather than in terms of the local caste situation. This is partly because each caste has a name and a body of customs and traditions which are peculiar to itself in any local area, and no other caste would be able to take up its name On the other hand, a local caste would not find it difficult to call itself Brahmin, Kshatriya or Vaishya by suitable prefixes' (Srinivas, 1962. *Varna and Caste*, p. 69).

The sanskritization of the name was advantageous in that it retained the original meaning of the word and gave an affiliation to the mythological ancestor and to his varna. An attempt was made to explain the names and occupations of the several sub-castes of the caste. 'Traditionally, it (sub-caste) was the smallest group which constituted the unity of endogamy, and the identity of this tiny group stood out sharply against other similar groups' (Srinivas, 1962, Intro : p. 4). The Rajaguru being conscious of the fissiparous tendency of tiny closed groups such as sub-sects has given a plausible explanation for the branching of the different sub-sects on account of different occupations. He also explained the differences found in their food habits, etc. He stated: 'As the result of their dispersal they lost their original culture and had to adopt changes suitable to their environment and professions.' He supported the claim of the caste to the title *Sagara kula* by quoting profusely from scriptures. As their spiritual guru he concluded by advising the different sub-castes to combine into one unit considering that they (the several sub-sections) were all from the same ancestor (mythological) and belonged to the Kshatriya varna. He might have foreseen the value of such a move in the politico-economic life of caste.

Record No. 26

In content and purport it is similar to Record No. 25. The caste is that of the Bedar (Hunters). In some of the districts of Mysore State the members of the caste are quite wealthy. Majority of them are agriculturists. The caste return itself as 'Valmiki' and appends the title Nayak or Nayaka (meaning military officer) as its caste denomination. In ritual status, though called Vaimiki, it occupies a rank below that of cowherds (Gollas) and shepherds (Kurubas). The Rajaguru in a printed pamphlet explained the obvious connection of the caste to its mythological ancestor Valmiki Muni (author of the epic Ramayana) and also the reason for its present low ritual status. He has attributed the fall to their failure to follow the rules of Dharma and Achara [formerly, they would not accept food from castes below the rank of Gokula (Golla), Yadava and Sagara but now they do]. To be invested with mythological ancestry based on Puranas and endowed with past political greatness would seem to be the first step in the upward thrust of a group to assume a slightly superior rank among the local castes. The change over of occupation from hunting to agriculture is explained suavely as being out of deference to the ascetic attainment of their ancestor. Valmiki Muni, who is said to have been so engrossed in his long penance that an ant hill grew up at the site and engulfed him. As an anthill is a thing of the earth, so is agri-

culture and the descendants of Valmiki by a natural sequence of events turned from hunting to agriculture as their occupation.

What is of importance is the scope and manner in which leaders like the Rajaguru use the Puranas for the benefit of the masses to maintain equilibrium amongst the various castes and sub-castes. The stratification in these villages is to a very large extent based on ritual consideration which in turn are governed by food habits, ideas of purity and pollution and certain others customs. A caste, therefore, when it desires or attempts at group mobility tries to come into line with the higher castes by adopting a sanskritic name, a mythological ancestor and modifying some of its customs—stages in the process of 'Sanskritization'. The three castes of Sagara (uppara), Bedar (Valmiki) and Harijans (Jambavas) in Rayalaseema region, at least, had an indisputable additional advantage of the religious sanction to their claim by the express and active support rendered by the Srivaishnava Guru of Kanakgiri Anegundi Simhasana. The interests of the Guru in the moral and religious uplift of these groups can be traced to the preachings of Sri Ramanuja who recruited adherents to his faith from all castes, including Harijans. No better example can be cited for it than the Chennangidasari (a section of Holeyas—untouchables) of Karnataka, Mala (untouchable in Andhra) and Paraiyar (untouchable in Tamilnad). Great many of the Chennangidasari, contrary to the wide spread belief about the untouchables are literates and recite the devotional hymns of the Srivaishnavas with correct rhythm and diction. The Rajaguru as one of the Acharyas of the Ramanuja tradition did not hesitate to extend his support and sanction to three castes of the region with a comparatively low caste rank to adopt Sanskritic names. By doing so, he made them aware of the high traditions of their origin and their dignity and infused in them a sense of amity.

Record No. 27

By referring to the untouchable caste (Holeyas) as Jambavas the Rajaguru gives tacit sanction to its adopting a Sanskritic name and a mythological ancestor Jambava. (The latter is believed to be ageless and therefore his descendants the Holeyas or Adi Karantakas are also of a hoary antiquity.) In the political struggle for freedom the polluting castes of Holeyas and Madigas (cobblers) gained the designation of Harijans by which name they are referred to in all government and other State records. But an almost unbridgeable rift exists between these two 'despised' castes. The Holeyas, Malas, Parayas who are numerically larger appropriate the name 'Harijan' for a larger slice of state benefices. In Rayalaseema at least the castes had succeeded

in adopting an imposing name Jambavas with the approval of its brahman guru. In fact the Rajaguru has explained in length supporting the claim of the Holeyas to its descent from Jambava of the epics.

In this particular pamphlet the Rajaguru by his proclamation has changed a traditional custom. During a marriage function the two parties had jointly to contribute 64 seers (approximately 64 kilograms) of rice for the preparation of 'bhuma utta' which is a communal feast pregnated with special social significance. Most of the members of the caste are landless agricultural serfs earning a bare minimum. To them 32 seers of rice will mean a great strain. But caste conventions have to be maintained as otherwise there is the risk of social segregation and loss of face in the group. A few of the representatives of the castes seemed to have realised the effects of the talons of the customs on the poorer sections of the group and appealed to the Rajaguru as the supreme authority on the caste conventions and code of social and moral behaviour to amend it to suit the resources of one and all. The Rajaguru had by virtue of his being a spiritual and social leader of all his disciples irrespective of caste has 'a comfortable scope for interpretation and reconciliation of scriptural sanctions'. He considered the proposition with his accustomed logic and experience, weighed its convenience and in convenience and used his knowledge of the local practices to decide the issue. He decided that each party should contribute five seers, thereby preserving the group's tradition and maintaining its social values. He alone is authorized to change tradition but what is significant is that his decision was not detrimental to the preservation of the essentials of the tradition. It was scheduled to fit within the framework of societal requirements, conveniences and usages.

Record No. 28

The file consists of a batch of papers relating to the affairs of Viswa-brahmanas (smiths). The important point is that the Jagadguru Srimad Yadgiri-Hirahal Matathipati sent a copy of a notice concerning an official of his organization to the Rajaguru for information. The Smiths or Viswabrahmanas, as they style themselves, do not accept the ritual superiority of the Brahmins and have no contact with the Brahmin matas or Gurus at any level. So it is surprising that as late as October 1961, the head of the Viswabrahmana organization found it expedient to inform the Vaishnava Brahmin Guru of certain disabilities imposed by the former on an officiant. It is likely that the Viswabrahmana Guru was well aware of the extent of control exercised by the Rajaguru on the affairs of the lower castes affiliated to Srivaishnava creed. The ritual position acclaimed by

the thoroughly Sanskritized Smiths of South India and that which is accorded to them by the other castes is at great variance. Indeed, the Smiths have practically no political or social power in these villages. Things which affect a Smith do not generally evoke the consideration of the village elders. It was, therefore, necessary for their Guru to refer the matter to the Rajaguru and secure his help.

Record No. 29

The case illustrates the instance when a case instituted in a Court of Law withdrawn to be settled by the Rajaguru. The correspondence relating to the case is elaborate and self-explanatory. What is of interest is the fact that a point of honour in regard to the receipt of customary honours was considered strong enough to make the parties seek redress in a Court of Law in the year 1962. It is also interesting to note that the case was settled out of court by the Rajaguru who was approached and the plaintiff and defendants withdrew the case from the Court. The decision of the Rajaguru is characteristically simple. Both the parties should enter into a compromise by collecting Veelyam (betel leaves and areca nuts) from all quarters, offer it to the Gurusthana to the plaintiff and, therefore, to the whole community assembled there. A case was made out by the lawyers trained in British mode of legal practice that the plaintiff suffered a loss of prestige with members of his community. Prestige and position in these castes are closely associated with the order of precedence of bestowal and receipt of customary honours. Any mistake is construed to be an intentional insult. Therefore, it has to be fought severely.

Record No. 30

The case is important both from the point of time and the cause for appeal to the Rajaguru. The first half of the record relates to the man who sent the appeal. In July 1964, he reiterates his allegiance to the Rajaguru and gives an undertaking to go to him to obtain his orders to carry on the duties of the caste council (kattemane) of Valmiki kula in the village. He also states that his paternal kin who were managing the affairs of the kattemane derived their authority from the Rajaguru.

The second half relates to the marriage of a girl. She was the legal heir to a property of about 12 acres of land. Her cross-cousin (who by custom and convention has the priority to her hand) wanted to marry her. But she did not. The kattemane was in a dilemma as the man threatened to marry her by force, if necessary. In all likelihood, traditionalists of the caste would have abetted his action. Therefore, the parties hastened to contact the Guru requesting him

to take the matter in his hand. He did it by issuing orders (advice) that it is wrong to get the girl married to a person whom she was not willing to marry. He ensured that no action should be taken by her cross-cousin by issuing separate orders to him to desist from any action which would be contravening law (as the girl had the freedom of choice as a member of the Indian Republic). Caste conventions are bound by political law and the Rajaguru as the preceptor is best suited to bring it home to these illiterate farmers. Neither the katemane nor the girl's mother thought of taking the matter to a Court of Law. It is not within the code of their social behaviour. They appealed to the Guru whose decision was binding on every individual of the caste and the year was 1964 which in itself highlights the position held by the Guru in these castes.

V. REMARKS

All the ancient codes of Hindu society relating to human conduct are based on a recognition of what is called *Varnashrama Dharma*. 'Dharma' is a concept which has a wide connotation. In its simplest sense, it means duty. Every human being has a duty to discharge towards his family, to his caste and society, his Preceptor and to God. The whole edifice of Hindu religion rests on dharma. Terms such as Kula dharma, Jati dharma, Matha dharma, Raja dharma are in common use even today.

The essential teachings of the ancient scriptures are for the most part concerned with the discharge of duties by individuals and groups in Hindu society, for the general welfare of mankind (*Sarvajana sukshino bhavantu : Samastha sanmangale shanti* : those are the words expressed at the close of prayers in community worship).

The Institution of caste, according to traditionalists, was primarily intended to ensure the welfare and prosperity of society by formalizing the allocation of different duties which different groups had been discharging. Caste dharma enjoins on the members of a caste to observe certain customs and conventions traditionally handed down through successive generations for the preservation of moral and social integrity of the caste.

Vast economic and political changes which have swept over the country do not seem to have affected the traditional culture of the people in any appreciable degree. This has been mainly owing to the control exercised by an organization of a group of elders in each caste empowered by the common consent of its members to restrain individuals from doing acts contrary to the established traditions of the

caste. This explains the existence of panchayats, kattermanes, Daiva-charas and so on, which abound in Karnataka region and which have been referred to in the case records reproduced in the previous pages.

The low ranking caste groups settled in the villages of the Karnataka region are mostly illiterate farmers. Many of them belong to the Srivaishnava sect Ramanuja Matha. An essential feature of Ramanuja Matha is the propagation of Srivaishnava (Visishtadvaita) creed among the masses through the Institution of Swayamacharya Purushas who established themselves in various parts of the country to minister to the religious needs of the seat. Religion plays a vital part in maintaining social equilibrium. A religious authority, an Acharya or Guru who could interpret traditions in the light of Dharmasastras and resolve differences and doubts in their social life is an imperative need of village groups in India. Successive Rajagurus of the Kanakgiri-Anegundi Simhasana have fulfilled the need for the past several centuries.

A Guru is different from the priests who are generally known as Purohits engaged for performing rituals. He ministers in quite a different way and is regarded by his disciples with great reverence. The Rajaguru of Anegundi Simhasana does not belong to the order of Sannyasis of the 'world and life negation' type like the Pontiffs of Smartha, Saiva and Vaishnava religious matas of Peninsular India. He is a 'grihasta' (householder) and is economically self-reliant and independent of the castes to whom he ministers. This fact confers additional value to his position as a religious preceptor and arbitrator.

A Guru has to maintain a high degree of religious integrity. Caste elders and kattermanes (caste councils) look to him for guidance and support in all matters involving social offences and regard his pronouncements as sacred. Many of the offence committed against caste traditions involve penalties like bahishkara (excommunication) which is a very serious thing affecting the social life of the offender, but which seems, nevertheless, necessary as an effective means of social control.

Hindu religion is sometimes classified as Ethical Religion. Social stigma imposed on individuals isolate them from the social sphere of their activities. It is much more effective than legal penalties in maintaining the norms of society. In some instances, the social ban continues throughout an individual's life time and sometimes for generations till it is removed. It is an extreme penalty which the caste group can impose, often not without some justification. Most of the cases that result in excommunication relate to adultery and incest. Sometimes, other offences which are regarded as serious moral and religious transgressions meet with the same punishment. It must be

remembered that some of these vices, particularly adultery and incest, are those which have been condemned by all societies. In India and particularly Hindu society, the concepts of sin and merit (papa, punya) are born of religion. Social stigma is attached to 'sin'. The caste groups follow a customary procedure in declaring a person outcaste and their action is subject to the approval of the Guru. The fact that the act of the caste panchayat or kattermane has the approval of the Guru possesses a high value potential, psychological and religious. It tends to carry conviction to the mind of the offender and the whole group. It serves as an example to the latter, while it forces the offender to take all possible steps to regain normal status in the caste.

At the folk level Hindu religion is a Redemption Religion. Customs and conventions of the lower caste groups of Karnataka are not so rigid as in some of the more sophisticated castes of South India. Rigidity is a consequential feature of 'Sanskritization'. There is no social transgression, in their caste repertoire, which cannot be redeemed by appropriate expiation (*viz.*, a penalty fine, purificatory ceremony or even a simple sign of acquiescence). The records of the Rajaguru showed that a large number of cases related to excommunications followed by the removal of the ban through expiation ceremonies (prayaschitta). To these groups at least expiation is not a meaningless concept socially. Expiation and the manner in which it is effected are intended to remove a social ban—a thumbscrew of the community on an individual. Until and unless the ceremony is performed the transgressor will not be permitted to enjoy his rights and privileges in the caste group. Those who suffer the penalty of excommunication do not; therefore, hesitate to seek the remedy of expiation so that they may be restored to their normal caste status.

The records discussed in these papers show the tendencies among some of the castes to improve their status through a process of 'Sanskritization'. They have substituted Sanskritic names for their castes tracing their origin to mythological ancestors like Sagara, Valmiki and Jambava. These castes by themselves have no historical consciousness (or to that effect mythological also). The Rajaguru seems to have explained to them about their origin, dispersal and ancient traditions and thus awakened in them a sense of dignity and unity. This has been explained clearly in the previous section of this work.

Singer states : 'The hierarchy gives the wise man, the Pandit, the Guru, the head of the math—a comfortable scope for interpretation and reconciliation of scriptural sanctions. He quite freely invokes considerations of logic, experience, the convenience and inconvenience

of a particular circumstance and local usages in coming to his decision. In this process the wise man and particularly the literati are an institutionalized agency for changing tradition, so long as they regard the change as primarily preservative of the traditions essentials'. This statement admirably bears out the usefulness of the Rajaguru in regulating the social and religious life of many of the castes of the Karnataka region following the Srivaishnava creed. It has been seen in the previous sections how he has passed decisions which would seem to imply deviations from the common custom but which did not really affect the essential features of the traditional culture. On the other hand, the changes wherever advocated were deemed necessary to preserve the essential of the tradition. For instance, in the case of the illegitimate conception of an unmarried girl, it would be a social crime if any harm was inflicted to the child in the womb by contemplating wilful abortion. The Rajaguru sought to prevent it by extracting assurances from all concerned that arrangements would be made for the safe delivery of the child. The life of the unmarried girl would be ruined on account of an act of moral indiscretion. The caste tradition permits divorce and 'udiki' marriage. It would, therefore, be quite in accord with tradition to declare that there should be no objection to her marrying anyone who seeks her hand.

One of the cases dealt with by him is that of readmitting a caste group to its original caste from Christianity. He clearly points out in his judgment that the event of birth is immutable that the change of faith which is a matter of one's inclinations (bhavasrya—concerning the mind) cannot alter the event of birth and that the family is eligible for readmission since it has not changed the traditional culture in food habits, self-regard and respect for their caste people. Here again, it is a matter of preserving the tradition's essentials that underlay the decision.

Another instance in which similar consideration is in evidence is the assimilation of a girl into a Harijan family and lineage. The girl's parents, who were Harijans became converts to Islamic faith. A childless Harijan redeemed their young daughter and adopted her as his own child. When she came of age, he sought the permission of the Rajaguru for the adoption after performing the necessary purificatory rites of 'chakrankana', etc. She had to be given a new name to be identified as a Vaishnavaita.

'Chakrankana', 'mudradharana', 'tirthaprasada', 'mantropadesa', 'panchagavya prayaschitta' are employed by the Rajaguru or any of the Srivaishnava Swayamacharya Purusha (and also any Hindu preceptor) to the performance of purificatory rites. 'Chakrankana', that is the

branding of the Vaishnava mark is an important rite of initiation. Only after this rite is performed, the individual becomes a fulfilled vaishnavite. He becomes the member of the larger community of Srivaishnavas (Ramanuja dasa) and gains the privilege and right to seek and gain the advantages of belonging to its members. 'Tirtha prasada' is a common custom in all religious institutions. It means the giving of holy water by the Guru. Receiving the 'Tirtha' given by the Guru removes pollution and is a simple expedient employed as an expiatory ceremony in cases of transgressions that do not call for any severe expiatory rites. 'Panchagavya' (a mixture of cowdung, cow's urine, clarified butter, milk and curd) is one of the methods prescribed in Hindu scriptures for the removal of pollution and purification of an individual. It consists of two forms : one sprinkling (prokshana) and the other intaking. Even inanimate objects as a house in which birth or death has occurred are subjected to purification by sprinkling a mixture of 'panchagavya'. What is of importance is that all the methods prescribed and employed by the Rajaguru and the caste councils are simple, inexpensive, assure quick remedy and acceptable to all concerned. A simple purification (prayaschitta) is more readily understandable to an illiterate Indian peasant than the long-drawn litigation in a Court of Law which more often leaves him penniless. In many cases such as that of using a footwear as a weapon of offence, the offender as well as the sufferer, has to undergo purification. It helps to boost up the morale of the sufferer and curb down the excesses of the aggressor. It is balanced justice.

The case in which the parties had withdrawn a law suit in 1962 to be settled by the Rajaguru is by far the best testimony to the fact that the institution of the caste with its components such as the caste councils, the Guru is still a vital force in the life of an average villager. The action reveals the trust that the disciples have in their traditional court of Justice, i.e., the presence of the Guru who is the custodian of the traditional law and customs. In one instance the witnesses cited by the plaintiff were very vague in their statements regarding the event, i.e., the plaintiff having been beaten with a chappal by the defendant. But the plaintiff himself when he had to give a statement to the Guru, accepted the fact and agreed to undergo the purificatory ceremony.

Certain emergent points of the study are as follows :

There is a tendency on the part of these caste groups which occupy lower ranks in the regional caste hierarchy to raise their status by adopting Sanskrit names, imposing restrictions on interdining and modification of certain customs to be in line with castes ranking above

them. For instance, divorce and widow remarriage (udiki) are indigenous customs : yet such women do not have the ritual status to participate in 'good sacred' rituals such as marriage and 'bhuma-utta'. Hindu scriptures do not recognize divorce nor do they permit widows to participate in any 'good sacred' rituals. With ingenuity a *via media* has been struck between convenience and idea. The Rajaguru has taken note of this policy in arriving at many of his decisions.

In concluding these remarks it can be said that the Rajaguru is as yet the most powerful and accepted agent of change and maintenance of customary law in these peasant castes. Any social change outside the purview of statutory law can be effected only by the tacit and express consent of the Guru. Caste councils that had become defunct seek the help of the Guru for their revival. The tendency to revive the hold of caste at different levels is a feature of the general phenomenon observable in the country. Caste councils intended to dispense justice in conformity with customary law and conventions as understood by its members can also be used by interested persons as a convenient mass medium at the socio-political level. It definitely welds the caste more firmly than any other institution can. The study does reveal to a certain extent the actual relation which exists between law as embodied in the ancient scriptures and that which operates and regulates the life of the villagers in conducting their everyday affairs. It does also help the student to assess the manner and extent to which the Rajaguru as a representative of an institutionalized agency accommodates and aids the functioning of customary law in the caste groups.

CONCLUSION

An attempt has been made in the previous pages to show the manner and extent of social control exercised by some of the religious institutions in the States of Mysore and Madras. Much of the authority of these institutions to deal with socio-religious questions seems originally to have been derived from the political heads (kings and chieftains) of the several areas of the States. The Hindu structure is composed of innumerable sub-castes grouped under the four Varnas and the social stability and integrity of each sub-caste depended on its adherence to its customs and certain socially established moral principles. It was the duty of the king to maintain social order in his kingdom and prevent social transgressions.

It was seen from the various letters and decisions set down in this work that each caste or sub-caste considered it a social necessity to maintain the social integrity of its members according to its traditions with the guidance of the religious institutions whenever necessary. Caste

panchayat is still a powerful institution in Karnataka region. It exacts implicit obedience from the members of the sub-caste which it represents. As has been detailed in the previous pages, the religious institution to which each sub-caste is affiliated gives the panchayat the transgressions of caste customs and conventions.

Tradition forms the core of the social philosophy of the Hindu caste. Very rarely does any member of a caste oppose or disobey the decisions of his panchayat or disregard the authority of the religious institution which, by tradition, holds the right to exercise religious control over the caste. The work of the panchayat serves to preserve the social unity of the caste concerned. It is a point of great social significance that the religious institutions endeavour with religious zeal to maintain the social solidarity of each caste. Any offence against the caste customs is regarded as an offence to be corrected for the sake of social harmony and solidarity. It is not, therefore, strange that even after Independence caste disputes are not taken to the civil or criminal courts for adjudication; nor do individual members approach the latter to invalidate the decisions of the panchayat. The religious institutions act as advisory bodies as well as the appellate authorities.

Excommunication—bahishkara—is the ultimate weapon in the hands of the panchayat. Every member of the local caste group obeys the restrictions imposed by the social ban on an offending member or family. The law of the land cannot restore an offender to his caste status. It is the panchayat alone that can do it after the punishment and penance (prayaschitta) prescribed for the offence have been undergone.

In problematical cases, it is the religious institution that has to offer guidance or make decisions. In such cases even punishment is prescribed by it. Purification ceremonies (prayaschitta, etc.) are prescribed by the religious authority or carried out under its guidance. To these lower castes almost all aspects of social life has a religious basis. It is, therefore, considered a religious duty for every member of a caste group to refrain from any kind of social intercourse with an offender under excommunication till he is declared by the Guru to have been purified and freed from his sin.

The religious institutions of the Advaita and Srivaishnava denominations follow, the ancient texts compiled by law givers such as Manu and Yagnavalkya. These texts have laid down appropriate rules in regard to sin and penance (prayaschitta) for the different varnas of the Hindu structure. The purpose of prayaschitta according to those law givers seems to be not only the 'purging of sins' but the 'admission

to intercourse with all people'. In ancient times 'parishads' (assembly of learned Brahmins) prescribed the punishment and the king enforced them. Religious institutions have assumed the role of the 'parishads' and the caste punchayat enforces the punishment as was done by the king in former days.

It is seen from the records reproduced in Parts I and II of this work, that a social ban or excommunication involved serious disabilities. The most important of them are that the offender cannot enter into marriage negotiations with his caste group and that he is not permitted to dine with any member of his caste. In an endogamous caste group, where the social forms of marriage are of the traditional type, it becomes a matter of urgent necessity for a person under ban to free himself from the sin by undergoing the 'prayaschitta' and other punishment prescribed. Only then can he perform a marriage.

The removal of ban is almost in every case signified by interdining or at least by distribution of betel leaves and areca nuts (vilyam) to the members of the local caste group. This seems to have been in vogue from ancient times. In the history of Dharma Sastra, Dr. P. V. Kane quotes from several ancient religious digests the procedure followed in the matter of sins and their expiation in olden days. He says, "So it follows that a man guilty of a crime was liable to three burdens, punishment by the king, penance prescribed by learned Brahmanas and giving dinner or sweetmeats to caste men"¹. In the same work he cites an instance where in 1737 A.D. the Peshwa Baji Rao "issued an order that they (the family praying for readmission into the caste) and their male progeny together with their wives should be restored back to caste and complete association with them as to taking food and marriage be carried on with them from generation to generation"². The procedure prescribed by the Peshwa seems to be quite in accord with the rules laid down in the sastras. The same is followed even today with the difference that the caste punchayat depends upon the religious institution and enforces the "social sanctions". It may be inferred from this that the two cultural items commensality and conubiality are among other things, the most important determinants of caste status, specially among the lower castes.

¹ Kane, P.V. 1953. History of Dharma sastras. Vol. IV, p. 76 Poona. Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona.

² *Ibid.* p. 55.

PLATE 1



His Holiness Shri Jagadguru Sankaracharya Abhinava Vidya-tirtha Bharati of Shri Sarada Peeta—Sringeri—Karnataka State

PLATE 2



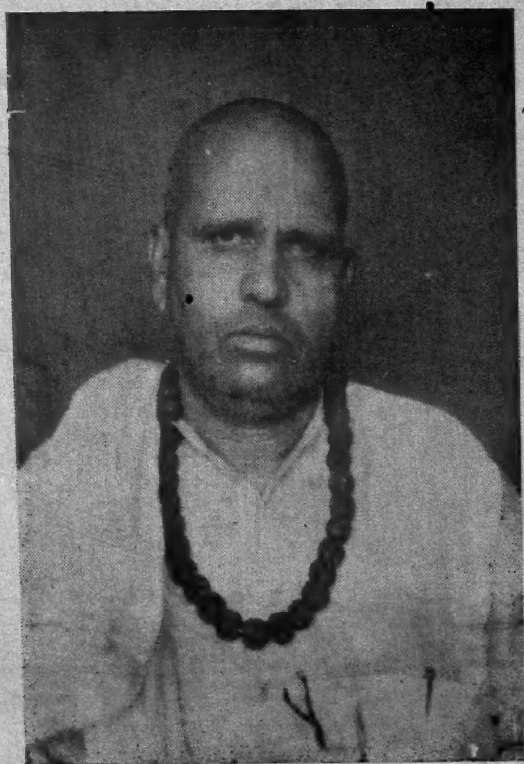
Shri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetathipati Jagadguru
Shri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swami
(By the kind permission of the South India Bhajana Samajam.)

PLATE 3



Anegundi Kanakgiri Samasthana Rajaguru
Shri Srinivasa Tholappacharya Swamivaru

PLATE 4



Head of a Vira-Saiva Matha in Chitradurga—
Karnataka State

204